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RELIGIOUS TRACTS,

DISPERSED BY THE

SOCIETY

FOR

PROMOTING

CHRISTIAN

KNOWLEDGE.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IX.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON
BOOKSELLERS TO THE SOCIETY,
NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
By Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

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THE CHRISTIAN's WAY TO HEAVEN:

OR,

WHAT HE MUST DO TO BE SAVED.

By a DIVINE of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE TWELFTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON, BOOKSELLERS TO THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M.DCC.XCVI.

[Price 1*d.* or 6*s.* a Hundred.]

My dear Friends,

I Here offer to you a plain Sermon in Print, that it may ſtay longer with you than it could do by the *Preaching*. It does contain, in ſhort, the main Duties of our Holy Religion, which we hope to be ſaved by, and which we ought at all Times to have preſent to our Minds. May the good God of Heaven bleſs it to your Edification, as I pray he may do the reſt of the Endeavours of

Your faithful Servant,

in CHRIST JESUS.

THE CHRISTIAN's WAY TO HEAVEN.

ACTS XVI. 30, 31.

Sirs, What muſt I do to be SAVED?

And they ſaid, Believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, *and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe.*

WHEN the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, and his Companion *Silas*, had upon Account of the Uproar of the Multitude againſt them, been commanded to Priſon by the Magiſtrates, and had *their feet made faſt in the Stocks*; God Almighty was pleaſed to ſhew a very great Miracle for their Deliverance. For upon their *Praying and ſinging Praiſes unto God, there was ſuddenly a very great Earthquake, ſo that the Foundations of the Priſon*

were ſhaken; and immediately all the Doors were opened, and every one's Bands were looſed. This put the Keeper of the Priſon into a great Conſternation, upon the ſuppoſed Loſs of his Priſoners; ſo that he would, had he not been prevented, have laid violent Hands upon himſelf. But his Fear abated on St. *Paul's* aſſuring him they were all there; and the Senſe of the miraculous Occurrence ſo awakened him into religious Thoughts, that it put him upon Inquiry, how he might obtain Happineſs in another World. He was now verily perſuaded of the Truth in general of what theſe good Men taught, that their Religion was from God; who had done ſo great a Miracle in favour of it; he did heartily believe that the Salvation of Mens Souls in another World, which they Preached, would be the Lot of all thoſe good Perſons who followed the Doctrines they were Preachers of; but ſtill he was ignorant of thoſe Precepts he was to practiſe in order to his Happineſs, and that was the Reaſon that with ſo great Earneſtneſs he cried out, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* That is, "I have now a Mind to be a Chriſtian, and to enter into that Covenant with God, which he has been pleaſed to offer to Mankind by Jeſus Chriſt; of the Truth of whoſe Miſſion, and the Sincerity of whoſe Promiſes, I am verily perſuaded; but I beſeech you to inform me of the Condition of this Covenant, which I am a perfect Stranger to, and to tell me what I am to do on my Part in order to attain that Happineſs which God promiſes to confer on his." To this the Apoſtles anſwer, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe.* That is, you ſhall obtain this your Deſire of Everlaſting Happineſs, if you ſtedfaſtly believe and ſincerely practiſe the Precepts of that Religion which

which was declared to the World by Jeſus Chriſt; and which you ſhall learn by our Inſtruction. For it is plain, that by this the Apoſtles did not mean a bare Belief, but a Performance of the other Duties likewiſe recommended by the Goſpel Diſpenſation. For in the next Words it is ſaid, That *they ſpake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his Houſe*, ver. 32. That is, they inſtructed him in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and explained to him what he was to Believe and Practiſe in this Goſpel-Covenant, that he might be Partaker of thoſe Promiſes he was deſirous of.

Now in diſcourſing to you upon theſe Words, I ſhall draw up, in a narrow Compaſs, all the General Rules and Obligations of the Chriſtian Religion, which will be uſeful for you upon theſe two Accounts.

First, Becauſe by this you may ſee your whole Duty at one View, which will be ſerviceable to you, in reducing to an eaſy Method what you have read and heard in good Books and Sermons; and will be more eſpecially uſeful to them who have not Time or Money to read or buy large Treatiſes on theſe Subjects.

Secondly, Becauſe by having theſe Terms of Salvation ready in your Mind, you will not be ſo eaſily ſubject to Deſpondencies, or uncomfortable Reflections upon the Danger of your Miſcarriage in a future State; for when you fully underſtand upon what Conditions every Man may certainly be ſaved; you need not trouble yourſelves to wait for any particular Marks of Aſſurance, which, after all, a Man may be deceived

in. But no Man has Reaſon to diſtruſt, that God Almighty will not reward him with eternal Happineſs, when he is ſure he has diſcharged thoſe Conditions which God in his Holy Word has promiſed eternal Happineſs to.

Now theſe Conditions or Qualifications of Salvation, I ſhall reduce to as few Heads as conveniently I can, and ſpeak to them in their Order.

CONDITION I.

To believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.

FIRST, *You cannot be ſaved, unleſs you believe the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and the main Articles of Faith contained in it.* For the Scripture ſays expreſsly; *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned,* Mark xvi. 16. Therefore you muſt believe, that there is one only (*a*) Eternal, (*b*) Almighty, (*c*) All-wiſe, and (*d*) Merciful God, who created (*e*) all Things by his Almighty Wiſdom and Power, and governs (*f*) them by his Providence; that he has ſent his only Son Chriſt Jeſus into the World, to Redeem, by his Blood, (*g*) the forfeited Souls of ſinful Mankind: and you muſt believe, that there is the holy Spirit (*h*) of God, the Comforter, which

(*a*) Deut. iv. 25. 1 Cor. viii. 4. Iſa. xlv. 5. John xvii. 3. Iſa. xlviii. 12. Gen. xxi. 33. 1 Tim. i. 17. (*b*) Gen. xvii. 1. Matt. iii. 9. Eph. iii. 20. (*c*) Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Tim. i. 17. Job. xi. 7. (*d*) Exod. xxxiv. 6. Luke i. 50. 2 Cor. i. 3. (*e*) Exod. xxxi. 17. Acts xvii. 24. (*f*) For the Providence of God, ſee Pſalm xxxvii. Prov. xi. 31. Job xxxvi. 6. Matt. vi. 28. (*g*) John viii. 42. 1 Tim. i. 15. Eph. i. 7. (*h*) John xxiv. 16. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John v. 14.

which our Saviour promiſed to ſend, which does continually put into our Mind good Deſires, does keep us from Temptations, (*i*) does ſanctify (*k*) all good Mens Hearts, and render them acceptable unto God. You muſt ſtedfaſtly believe that the Holy Scriptures are the (*l*) inſpired Word of God; and particularly, that the Miracles and Doctrines of our bleſſed Saviour were really true, and ſuch as they are there recorded to be. Now unleſs you cordially believe theſe Things, you can have no Pretence to enter into Covenant with God in this Chriſtian Diſpenſation, and to be intitled to the Salvation propoſed by Jeſus Chriſt; for otherwiſe you are *Infidels*; and though you ſhould outwardly join yourſelves in Communion with Chriſt's Flock, yet you will receive no more Benefit by that, than if you were *Mahometans* or *Pagans*. Therefore in the firſt Place, you muſt take Care to have a firm Belief of theſe Things, and to *be always ready to give an Anſwer to every Man that aſketh you a Reaſon of the Hope that is in you*; that is, to believe the Doctrines of Chriſtianity upon rational Grounds, nor to ſtick to them only upon the Prejudice of your Education, but becauſe upon full Search and Inquiry, you find all the Reaſon in the World to believe them. Whenever you find any unbelieving Thought to riſe up in your Minds, which the Devil will never be wanting, upon Occaſion, to ſuggeſt, uſe your utmoſt Endeavour to ſhake off that ungodly Doubt, by confronting it with ſome indubitable Truth, or by getting further Information of abler Chriſtians. But above all, by conſtant Reading and

(*i*) 2 Pet. ii. 9. Rom. viii. 26. Rev. xii. 10. (*k*) Tit. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. (*l*) 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Studying God's Word (*m*), and by fervent Prayer to him to help your Unbelief; for you may be aſſured, that ten to one more *Infidels* are made by a Neglect of Reading the Scriptures, and of daily Prayers to God, than by all the poiſoned Books and Diſcourſes which are levelled againſt our Religion. And I would have you obſerve farther, which is a great Argument for you to ſettle in your Hearts a firm Belief of all the Goſpel Truths, that there is hardly any Wickedneſs which Men commit, or any Sin they fall into, but it proceeds chiefly from ſome kind of Infidelity or other; becauſe they do not rightly believe the Providence of God, or his Juſtice, or Mercy, or Veracity; but have got into their Heads ſome fond Notion of their own concerning theſe Attributes, which may better agree with their vicious Lives, than that Idea which God has given of himſelf in his Holy Word. Therefore be ſure to be well principled, and to have true Notions of theſe Matters; uſe your utmoſt Endeavours firmly to believe, and fully to underſtand all that the Holy Scriptures ſay concerning them; for this is the Foundation of all true Religion: and unleſs this be rightly laid, all the other Building, which may be raiſed afterwards, falls to the Ground, and comes to nothing.

CONDITION II.

To avoid all groſs Sins.

SECONDLY, *AFTER the Believing of the Goſpel Truths; in the next Place, in order to your Salvation, and as another Branch of your Covenant with Chriſt, you muſt leave off all groſs and apparent Sins.* For a Man, whilſt he lives a lewd and

(*m*) John v. 39. Acts xvii. 4. Rom. xv. 4.

and vicious Life, can have no Hopes of Salvation: ſuch, by the whole Tenor of the Goſpel, being excluded from it. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* gives you a long Catalogue of ſuch Sins as are inconſiſtent with Salvation. *Now the Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like; of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in Time paſt, that they which do ſuch Things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Therefore if you would have any Hope of going to Heaven, you muſt leave off a wicked Courſe of Life; you muſt take Care to repent of, and to forſake ſuch Sins as will ſhut you out from thence. You cannot expect to go thither, whilſt you live in a State of Adultery or Uncleanneſs, if you are not juſt in your Dealings, and do not make Satisfaction and Reparation for all the Wrongs and Injuries you have done; if you live in a Courſe of Drunkenneſs; if you are guilty of Profane Swearing and Curſing; if you live Quarrelſomely and Contentiouſly with your Neighbours; if you be Proud and Haughty, Malicious and Revengeful. Therefore it behoves you, not only to be careful to avoid Drunkenneſs, Incontinency, and other fleſhly Sins, but to diveſt yourſelves of Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; for theſe ſpiritual Vices are as much inconſiſtent with a State of Chriſtianity as the fleſhly; they do as much Miſchief in this World, and make a Man as unqualified for the other; and you may further take Notice, that the moſt wicked Beings of all God's Creation, I mean the Devils in Hell, have no Sins of the Fleſh to anſwer for, and yet

they shall undergo the most terrible Damnation for their Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; which too many Men do look upon, in themselves at least, as hardly any Sins at all.

CONDITION III.

To avoid every single Sin we know to be such.

THIRDLY, *IN order to your Salvation you must take care not only to avoid a settled Course of Wickedness, or a Life of Viciousness, but to root out of your Hearts every single Sin you can find there.* There is a great many Men, that for the generality live good and virtuous Lives, but yet there is some bosom Sin they indulge themselves in, and do, as it were, compound with God Almighty to part with all the rest to retain that. Thus there are several who can without any great Difficulty refrain from Intemperance or Covetousness, or Pride, or Contention, so they may but enjoy their Lust. To another, Covetousness is the only Darling, and he can be content to be Chaste and Sober, in hopes that God will excuse him for being Hard and Griping. Mistake not; God Almighty does expect to be loved with all the Mind, and all the Soul, and all the Strength, *Matt.* xii. 30. *We must perfect Holiness in the Fear of the Lord,* 2 Cor. vii. 1. And we are taught, *that he who shall keep the whole Law, and offend in one Point, he is guilty of all,* James ii. 10. That is, he shall as effectually be damned for that one Sin unrepented of, as if he had been guilty of many more Sins. Therefore do not cheat yourselves, and fool yourselves out of your precious Souls, by thinking you shall ever go to Heaven by serving God by Halves. God Almighty will either have your whole Souls, or

none; he will never ſuffer you to make Him a Sharer with the Devil. Do not think it will avail you to ſay, it is but one Sin, for that one is fatal. For Sin to the Soul, is like a ſtrong Poiſon to the Body, a Drop of it is as killing as if you drank a Gallon. So that upon the whole, you have no Way to ſecure your Salvation, but by forſaking every known Sin, though never ſo ſmall in your Opinion; if you know it to be a Sin, you muſt know it to be Damnable, and that there is no Salvation to be expected while you continue in it. Therefore you muſt frequently examine your Conſciences, and ſtrictly ſurvey and look into every Corner of your Soul, and whatever Sin you find there, diſpatch it without any Quarter, and do not put it off from Time to Time, as being unwilling to part with it, but take the firſt Opportunity to repent of and amend it; beg God Almighty's Pardon for the former Commiſſion of it, and his Grace for the future to avoid it.

CONDITION IV.

To practiſe all the Goſpel Virtues.

FOURTHLY, *THE next Step you muſt take, in order to be ſaved, is to practiſe the Goſpel Virtues; which you find laid down in God's Word for your Chriſtian Performance.* For Chriſtianity does not conſiſt only of a few negative Precepts; it does not oblige you juſt only to avoid Sin, but it engages you to the Performance of ſeveral Virtues and Graces: which unleſs you can make yourſelves Maſters of, you cannot be qualified for Heaven. Do not be cheated with that Notion, which ſome ſilly People have of a good Man, as when they ſay, Such an one is a good Man, becauſe he does no Body any Harm; as if it was enough to be

Religious, not to be Miſchievous. For a Man may abſtain from this, upon Account of good Nature, and a gentleman-like Education: and beſides, this ſingly of itſelf is no great Matter of Virtue, and is no more than what Stocks and Stones, and tame Beaſts may pretend to; for they likewiſe do no Body any Harm. But true Chriſtianity has in it more Spirit and Vigour; it is a Life of Action: and thoſe who pretend to it, muſt not only avoid all ill Things, but they muſt do a great many good ones.

HUMILITY.

YOU muſt learn therefore to practiſe the Chriſtian Grace of *Humility* (*n*); you muſt have as mean Thoughts as poſſibly you can of yourſelves, upon Conſideration that all you can boaſt of does proceed from the free Gift of God; you muſt not deſpiſe the meaneſt of your Fellow-Creatures; but rather glorify your gracious God, who has been pleaſed to beſtow on you more liberal Talents; and laſtly, you muſt ſhew to all a meek and courteous Behaviour, conſidering that they proceed from the ſame common Stock, and do partake of the ſame common Nature with you, and that Chriſt condeſcended to die for the Pooreſt as well as the Greateſt.

PATIENCE.

YOU muſt likewiſe adorn your Souls with *Patience* (*o*), and bear your Afflictions with a true Chriſtian Magnanimity and Fortitude, and with a perfect Reſignation to the good Will of God, conſidering that he ſends thoſe Sufferings out

(*n*) Matt. xx. 26. (*o*) Luke xxi. 19. James v. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 20.

out of a pure fatherly Kindness and Correction, to wean us from the World, and to bring us nigher unto him: to give us Demonstration of our Legitimacy in Grace, and that we are not Bastards, but Sons.

FORGIVENESS, *and* LOVE *of our Enemies.*

We must learn likewise to *forgive our Enemies, to do good to them that hate us; and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us* (*p*); considering that we have for this the express Command and Example of our Blessed Lord, and that a meek and peaceable Disposition is the greatest Ornament of a Christian; and does not only conduce to the Peace and Quiet of the World, but to a Man's own Satisfaction; whilst Malice and Revenge do rack the Soul with continual Torment, and turn Society and Neighbourhood into Tumults and Flames.

CHARITY *of Opinion.*

YOU must likewise endeavour to make yourselves eminent in other Acts of *Charity* (*q*). You must be charitable in your Opinions and Censures of other Men: you must not be too forward in believing slanderous Reports, nor too busy in relating other Mens Failures; you must have a Care of denouncing Damnation upon all who differ in Religious Matters from you; but let your Love go with them with whom your Opinions cannot.

CHARITY *of Relief.*

YOU must, according to your Abilities, be liberal unto the Poor (*r*), considering that God has

(*p*) Matt. v. 44. (*q*) 1 Cor. xiii. 4. (*r*) Deut. xv. 7. Ps. xli. 1. Luke xiv. 13. Prov. xxviii. 27.

has made us, who are in a better Capacity, Stewards for them; and the Scriptures assure us, that *he who is Merciful to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord:* and therefore we may be sure, when God Almighty has engaged himself to be our Debtor, he will repay us with the greatest Interest.

MORTIFICATION *and* SELF-DENIAL.

OUR Religion obliges us yet farther to a higher Duty, and which does run a little more contrary to the Stream of our natural Inclinations, and that is, to *Mortification* and *Self-Denial* (*s*). And *to mortify our Members, and to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, Tit. ii. 12. is not without Reason enjoined us. For though we may live an ordinary Life of Virtue, without undergoing these severer Duties, yet it is very difficult to do it; and if we do not restrain and abridge our Appetites oftentimes in lawful Things, they will be apt to grow so headstrong, that we shall be hardly able to keep them from unlawful ones. Besides, since God Almighty has designed this World only as a State of Probation for the other, where there are none of these sensual Enjoyments to be found, it is but reasonable we should be something weaned from these lower Pleasures, that we may be able to relish those high and exalted ones which are designed for us hereafter. These, and all other Virtues which are prescribed to you by God's Word, you must exercise yourselves in, in this your Christian Warfare; you must run this Race which God has set before you, if you would obtain the Crown which is laid up for you. And to do this the better, let this be your constant Rule; to do every thing with

(*s*) Matt. v. 29. Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5.

with Readiness, which you are persuaded will be acceptable to God, and to let your Light shine before Men, that is, to endeavour to shew the best Example in Religion, which, without Ostentation and Vanity, you possibly can; and lastly, to do all the Good you can in your Generation; if you do this sincerely, though it may be with a great deal of Imperfection, God Almighty in his Goodness will accept this imperfect, for a compleat Obedience.

CONDITION V.

To observe the Ordinances of Christ, and his Holy Church, Public Prayer, as well as private, Morning and Evening.

FIFTHLY, *NEXT, in order to your Salvation, you must be diligent in observing the Ordinances, which either Christ himself or his Holy Church hath instituted for the Furtherance of Godliness and true Religion.* Therefore you must be constant in the Duty of Prayer, as well Public as Private (*t*). You must at least twice every Day, Morning and Evening, betake yourselves to your Closets, or some private Place of your Houses, and there pray to God to forgive you whatever Offences you have committed, and to beg his Grace and Protection for the Time to come. If you neglect this Duty, you live the very Lives of *Heathens*, you quite put yourselves out of God's Favour and Care, which good Christians lay claim to, and have nothing but your base Baptism to distinguish you from the profane *Pagans*.

Benefit

(*t*) Isa. l. 7. Luke xviii. 8. Acts iii. 1. Matt. xxi. 13. Matt. vii. 7. Luke viii. 1. Rom. xii. 12. Ephes. vi. 18. Psal. cxix. 164.

Benefit of public PRAYER.

YOU must likewise, at least upon Sundays and Holidays, attend the Public Service of the Church (*u*); for the Apostle taxes the forsaking the Assemblies as a great Fault, *Heb.* x. 25. And in the Public Congregation we may expect our Prayers to be sooner heard, when they are joined with the united Prayers of so many good People.

Hearing the WORD, *and that from our own Minister.*

YOU must likewise be very diligent and attentive in *Hearing the Word of God*, as it is (*w*) Preached by his Ministers; for the Scripture tells us, that *Faith comes by Hearing*, Rom. x. 17. And therefore you ought not to slight this great Means of your Salvation. Neither must you indulge yourselves in silly Fancies, in liking or not liking your Minister's Phrase or Action, but you ought chiefly to mind the Substance of what he says; for you may benefit enough, if you please, by the meanest Minister of the Gospel, if you hear him with that Soberness you ought; for let me tell you, the Fault of your not profiting does not so much lie in unedifying Ministers, as in unpractising Congregations. Nor must you run about, gadding to other Churches, to hear others you are better pleased with; for besides the great Fault you commit in discouraging your own Minister's Endeavours, you cannot expect that God should afford the same Blessing to the Hearing of the Word out of the Method he has prescribed,

(*u*) 1 John iii. 2. Chron. xx. (*w*) Rom. x. 17. Luke viii. 18.

preſcribed, and from thoſe to whom he has not given the Charge of your Souls.

Reading the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

YOU muſt likewiſe be conſtant in Reading God's Word (*x*), or getting it read to you; for this is the moſt conſiderable Motive you can make uſe of to a good Life; becauſe then you hear God Almighty himſelf ſpeaking to your Conſciences, whoſe Authority will prevail much more with you than our Preaching; and beſides, by this you may examine the Doctrine which we teach, and ſee that we do not impoſe upon you, but preach to you what is agreeable to that excellent Rule.

Frequent Receiving the LORD's SUPPER.

YOU muſt furthermore, as frequently as conveniently you may, receive the *Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood:* for whilſt you live in a conſtant Neglect of this, you have little Pretence to be Chriſtians, becauſe our Bleſſed Lord has commanded all his Followers to *do this in Remembrance of him*; and if you will not thus Remember him, and ſhew this Token by your Communion with him and his Church, you do in effect deny your Baptiſmal Vow, and turn Renegados to the Religion of Chriſt. This is the Oath of Fidelity to our Heavenly Prince, which he has required of you frequently to renew; which, if you refuſe, you caſt off all Allegiance and Subjection to him, and turn Rebels to his Adminiſtration. Whilſt you neglect this, you deprive yourſelves of the Grace of God's Holy Spirit,

(*x*) Matt. 22. 29. John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.

Spirit, which is plentifully conveyed by a due Receiving this Holy Sacrament; you leave your Souls defenceless against all the Assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, which may attack them; and defraud yourselves of the Seal of God's Pardon for Sin, which is fully given to all worthy Receivers.

Religious observing SUNDAYS *and* HOLIDAYS.

You must also Religiously observe all the *Feasts* and *Fasts* of the Church, not only by coming to Church on *Sundays*, *Fast-days* and *Holidays*, but by dedicating besides some considerable Part of them to your Religious Exercise in private.

Bringing Children to public BAPTISM, CATECHISM *and* CONFIRMATION.

YOU must, lastly, take Care to bring your Children, as soon as may be, to partake of the *Holy Sacrament of Baptism*; not at Home, as is the vain and irreligious Fashion of some, but to Church, where this Sacrament may be more solemnly administered, and where your Children may partake of the joint Prayers of the Congregation of God's People: And when you have done so, you must see them well instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; and that they come to take their Religion upon themselves, which their Sureties in Baptism promised they should, when the Bishop does administer the sacred Ordinance of Confirmation.

CONDITION VI.

To watch against all Temptations and Failures.

SIXTHLY, and LASTLY, *IN order to Salvation, you must take Care to exercise another Duty, which is particularly recommended by our Saviour, as a Guard to all the rest; and that is Watchfulness,* Matt. xxiv. 42. and xxv. 14. Acts xx. 31.

THOUGH you have truly repented of your Sins, and got into a Habit of Virtue, and a Religious Course of Life; yet if you have not a great Guard upon yourselves, you will insensibly relapse again into your former Condition: For you must needs think that the Devil will use the utmost of his Spite and Cunning, and will play his main Batteries upon those who have forsaken his Cause, and are obedient to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scripture informs you, that he goes about *like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour,* 1 Pet. v. 8. And you may reasonably suppose, that he will devour none so easily as those Christians who live off their Guard; therefore when you have forsaken a Course of Sin, and are arrived at a tolerable Perfection of Virtue and Godliness, do not sit down secure, as if there was nothing more to be done: for in your Christian Warfare there is Work enough to go forwards in, as long as you live. It requires a great deal of Diligence and Circumspection to keep the Ground you have already gotten, to stand firm against all Temptations, and to maintain your Integrity in a vicious Age, when Wickedness is oft-times applauded, and Virtue

meets

meets with ſo great Diſcouragement. But there is hardly any ſtanding at a Stay in a Religious Courſe; you will either go Forwards or Backwards, and therefore be watchful, that you do not move the wrong Way; and this you cannot be ſure of, unleſs, as long as you live, you be improving in Virtue. I do not doubt, but many Chriſtians are in a ſalvable State, that are ſubject to many Imperfections and Failures; but as they live on, they muſt ſtill go forwards in the Conqueſt of theſe. A ſincere Penitent, who is juſt come out of a flagitious Courſe of Life, has enough to do to fence againſt the groſs Sins he has ſo much been accuſtomed to: but God expects from one who has been long habituated to a Courſe of Godlineſs, that he ſhould be very watchful againſt all Human Imperfections whatſoever. Such an one muſt not think ſo eaſily to be excuſed from Sins of Ignorance, when after a long Exerciſe in hearing and reading God's Word, he might have better informed himſelf of his Duty; he cannot ſo well plead Sins of Infirmity, when his Nature has very conſiderably loſt its Bias to Sin by a long Courſe of Virtue. Therefore good Chriſtians muſt be going forwards in a State of Virtue as long as they live; they muſt be ſtill bettering and improving their Natures, more and more informing their Underſtandings in Religious Truths, and rectifying their Wills; they will find Work enough to watch againſt all imprudent and offenſive Actions, againſt idle Words, againſt ſudden Anger, againſt Coldneſs, and ſome involuntary Excurſions in Devotion. And for an Incouragement to this Progreſs, God Almighty will not only reward them with a bare *ſaving their Souls*,

Souls, but will liberally beſtow on ſuch the Ten Talents, *Luke* xix. 24. He will advance them, according to their Improvement in Piety, to one of the higheſt Thrones in the heavenly Kingdom; *For one Star differeth from another Star in Glory*, 1 Cor. xv. 41.

AND now let me ſpeak a Word or two, by way of Exhortation and Inference from what has been ſaid.

Firſt, LET me apply myſelf to the more mature and elderly Sort among you.

You have been long ſince inſtructed in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion; you have had the Catechetical Inſtruction of the Church in your younger Days, and have heard the Word of God conſtantly Preached unto you in your riper Years; and therefore you ought not only to know your Duty, but to be conſiderable Proficients in it. It is a Shame for you to be ignorant of thoſe Chriſtian Doctrines, which the Children are taught to underſtand; and to be then to learn the Way to Heaven, when you have hardly Time perhaps before Death to do it in. Oh! what a killing Speech is it to hear a Man ſay, he did underſtand Religion when he was Young! Wretched Sinner! What haſt thou been doing of all this Time? You that ought to have been the Teacher of Religion to others, Doſt thou want the very Inſtructions of this Duty thyſelf? How canſt thou anſwer it to God, to retain thy Trade, thy Debts, and every Thing elſe in Mind, and only to have forgot thy Religion? If there be any ſuch among you,

get

get out of this wicked Careleſſneſs as ſoon as you can; apply yourſelves to the Reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books; come conſtantly to Church, and mind what is there ſaid, and be aſhamed to continue in ſuch Ignorance any longer.

As for you who have not been ſo very negligent as to forget your Duty, but yet nevertheleſs, in deſpite of your Knowledge, and under Conviction of your own Conſciences, do live in a conſtant Breach of it; free yourſelves with all Speed from this hazardous State; and venture not your Souls in a State of Sin, which you know to be damnable, one Moment longer. How can you anſwer it to the Mercy of God, to continue in a Courſe of Wickedneſs, when he has given you ſo much Time to repent in? How can you anſwer it to your own Conſciences, which are continually upbraiding you with neglect of your Duty? How can you anſwer it to your Children and Families, to whom you ſhould give an Example of Piety and Religion? But you ſet them a Copy only of Profaneneſs and Wickedneſs.

As for thoſe good Perſons among you, who have been mindful of the One Thing neceſſary, and taken Care for their Souls; who have acquainted themſelves *what they are to do to be* SAVED, and have made their Practice conformable to their Knowledge; let me beſeech you, my dear Brethren, to pay God your continual Thanks for this great Meaſure of Grace beſtowed upon you; to be modeſt and humble in your Virtuous Accompliſhments; and to aſcribe all your

your Spiritual Strength to the Goodness of God; to endeavour more and more to improve in Grace; and, like St. *Paul*, *to forget those Things which are behind, reaching forth unto those Things which are before, and pressing towards the Mark, for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Secondly, AND for the Close of all, let me apply myself to the younger Sort among you.

LET me beseech you to bear in Mind the good Instruction and Christian Information, which you receive from your Pastors and Friends in your Youth; and let what you learn in those tender Years remain fresh in your Memories under the Hoary Head; let me beseech you to enter upon a Religious Course of Life betimes, because now you have all the Advantages in the World to go forward in it. You have no inveterate Habits and old Customs of Sinning to conflict with, which oftentimes renders all the Endeavours of a riper Age ineffectual. Your Nature now is tender and pliable, and as it takes its bent in this Age, it does for the most Part stand for ever. Therefore this is the Time to give it a virtuous Impression and a true Bias to Holiness, before the Devil takes Possession of it, and warps it the contrary Way. Think how pleasing and acceptable to God an early Piety is, and what an Affront it is to dedicate only the Dregs of your Life to his Service, and the Flower of it to the Devil.

ENDEAVOUR to settle in your Minds, now you are Young, a true Taste of Godliness, and of the

the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion; which above all other Religions that ever were in the World, does more eſpecially recommend it.— Weigh in your Hearts ſeriouſly the admirable Rewards which it promiſes to thoſe who perform the Conditions of the Goſpel, and be not led aſide by the Vanities of this World, to forfeit thoſe exceeding Glories of the other. And when you are fully informed, *What you muſt do to be* SAVED, take Care that you do not miſs of that Salvation, whereof you know the Methods of obtaining.



FINIS.

2.

CHRISTIAN DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEGROES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
N° 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M DCC LXXXIX.


BRITISH MUSEUM

ADDRESS

TO THE

NEGROES.

MY good Friend, you are desired to read this little book with great care and attention. You may read the first Instruction on Sunday, to as many Negroes as will sit down with you to hear you. And do you and they think upon it every day in the week, and talk to each other about it. The better you grow yourself, and the more Negroes you teach their duty to God, the more happy you will be when you die. The next Sunday read the second Instruction, and when you come to the end of the book, you must begin it again, and so go on to your dying day, to read, or hear it read. And when you shall begin to be pleased with knowing your duty to God, you will be pleased with praying to him, and with saying the prayers at the end of this book; and you will get them by heart as soon as you can. Begin with the Morning Prayer, and if you should be called out before the day breaks, and you

have no light in your cabin or room, you may ſay it to yourſelf as you walk along the path, and when you are at your work. You may ſay prayers in the night, for God ſees you in the dark, and will hear you. Next to reading and praying, you ſhould take delight to ſing good and religious ſongs, and none but ſuch. You will, as ſoon as you can, get by heart the ſongs at the end of this book. Begin with the Morning Song, and get one verſe, and more if you can, every week, and ſing them at your work and at home, to any tune, if it be grave, and if you try to pleaſe God for the good of your ſoul. If you go on in this way, your taſk will be eaſy, the day you will think ſhort, and your mind will be chearful. The great God who made you, will be your friend, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who redeemed you, will love you, and ſend the holy and good Spirit to protect you from the devil and all evil ſpirits, and to bring you out of all temptations to ſin; and when you die, the Lord Jeſus will receive your ſoul, and bring it before God, where you will be happy for ever; which that you may, is the daily prayer of him who ſends you this book.

CHRIS

CHRISTIAN DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEGROES.

INSTRUCTION I.

NEGRO.

WHY are you so earnest in persuading me to become a christian?

Minister. Because I know for certain, that it is the only sure way to keep you from misery, and to make you happy both here and hereafter.

Neg. I will be very thankful, if you will be so kind as to explain to me what you say concerns me so very much.

Min. That I will moſt freely do: for my heart's deſire is, that all perſons may have the ſame knowledge of God, and his will, as we chriſtians have; and beſides, by teaching you, I myſelf ſhall be a very great gainer.

Neg. I do not underſtand what you mean by that.

Min. I will tell you then: The great God, whom we chriſtians worſhip, He who made the world and all things in it, and in whoſe hands our breath and life is, and who would have all his people to be happy, He has promiſed a very great reward to all ſuch as ſhall ſtrive to make him, and his glorious perfections, and his moſt gracious purpoſes, known unto men, eſpecially to ſuch unhappy people as you poor Negroes, who know not for what end you were made, and ſent into this world; who know not what duties you owe to your Maker, nor on what conditions he will keep you from miſery, and make you for ever happy when you die.

Neg. Be pleas'd then to tell me what you know more than we do, concerning the God you worſhip; for we know and believe, that there muſt be ſome great power above us, who made us, and does govern all things here below.

Min.

Min. But we chriſtians know much more of that great power above, than you, in your preſent ſtate of ignorance can do. We were indeed once as ignorant of him, (and of our moſt unhappy condition on that account) as you now are; but he has been ſo good as to make himſelf and his will known to us, to our very great comfort and happineſs; and we cannot but deſire that every one may be as happy as all true chriſtians are in knowing their Maker's will, and honouring him, as good people ought to do.

Neg. May I aſk you one thing?—Why did not that good Being, whom you call your God, make all this known to us as well as to you?

Min. I muſt tell you once for all, that we poor creatures ought not to expect, that the great God ſhould give us an account of every thing he has thought fit to do. It is enough for us to know for certain, that he is good and juſt in every thing he does, or permits to be done.—And be aſſured, that, ſooner or later, every tongue ſhall confeſs, and every ſoul ſay, that God is juſt and good in all he does.—At preſent it concerns you much more to know what we chriſtians believe of God and his will, according to the account which he himſelf hath given us.

Neg. This, Sir, is what I now beg you to tell me.

Min. That I will moſt gladly do; for to know and believe in God is the foundation of all true religion, and of the happineſs of men.

Firſt then, We know the God we ſerve to be the moſt perfect of all Beings; and that there is no other God beſide to be feared, loved, or worſhipped.

That it is he who made the world; and that he preſerves, and governs, and orders all things by his great wiſdom and power.

That amongſt other creatures he made man to be partaker of his happineſs; in order to which, he gave him reaſon, that he might underſtand, and adore, and obey his Maker.

And that men might know him well, and love and fear him as they ought, he has given an account of his government of the world ever ſince he made it.—By which account it appears,—That he is Almighty,—and is able to do whatever he thinks fit:—That he is very wiſe, and good, and juſt; and can command nothing but what is for our advantage; and will moſt ſurely reward good men and women, and puniſh the wicked. We alſo know, that he is a moſt holy Being, and has ever been diſpleaſed with bad men.

He

He is alſo moſt kind to thoſe, who, having offended him, are truly ſorry for it, and return to their duty:—He ſees and knows all the actions of men, whether good or bad; and even our very thoughts are known to him:—He not only knows things paſt and preſent, but even all things which ſhall ever happen hereafter:—And he is moſt faithful to his word, ſo that whatever he has promiſed he will moſt ſurely make good; and whatever he has threatened, he will as ſurely execute.

Neg. I think this account of the great and good God ſeems moſt agreeable to reaſon; now you have put me upon conſidering it.

Min. But there are other very great truths which God has alſo in that account made known to us, and which our reaſon could never have clearly diſcovered; ſuch as theſe that follow:—That there will be another life after this;—and that the true happineſs or miſery of men will not be fully known till after they are dead.

Neg. Till after they are dead, Sir!—Why, do you chriſtians know what ſhall become of men after they are dead?

Min. Yes we do, and that moſt certainly.—We know that this ſhort life is only a life or ſtate of trial, in order to mend our corrupt nature, that we may be

fit for a much better world when we die; and be for ever happy there, if we behave ourſelves as we ſhould do, while we live here.—For God has made known to us, That after death the ſouls of all good people go to a place of reſt, and peace, and happineſs;—and the ſouls of wicked people to a place of ſorrow and miſery, there to remain till the end of this world, and the day of judgment.

Neg. Pray, what do you mean by the end of the world, and by the day of judgment?

Min. Why, God has told us, that this world ſhall have an end;—that then there will be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt, both of good and bad men; that all who have ever lived ſhall then be raiſed to life, and give an account for whatever they have done in this world, whether good or evil:—And that ſuch as have done good ſhall be made happy for ever;—and ſuch as have done evil, that is, have led wicked lives, and have not repented in due time, ſhall be for ever miſerable.

Neg. Theſe indeed are truths which we know nothing of; and if they be really true, it certainly concerns me, and every man living, to think of them in good earneſt, and to order his life accordingly.

—But

—But let me aſk you,—Do all you chriſtians know theſe things, and believe them to be true?

Min. It is at the peril of their ſouls if they do not.—But I know why you aſk that queſtion, and I promiſe to anſwer and ſatisfy you upon that head hereafter. —In the mean time, it is your beſt and wiſeſt way to take care of yourſelf, in an affair of the higheſt importance to you; and not to neglect this opportunity, which God of his mercy and goodneſs gives you by me, of coming to the knowledge of your Maker, and of the duties you owe to him, to yourſelf, and to all others, leſt they ſhould be hereafter for ever hid from you, to your eternal ruin and deſtruction.

Neg. I hope I ſhall take your good advice. But in the mean time will you give me leave to aſk you,—How did God make theſe things known unto you chriſtians?

Min. That you ſhall know in due time; for you cannot know all things at once.—And theſe few truths only I have told you, at this time, that you may know and conſider what you have to do;—that you may, in good earneſt deſire to be further taught, and told how you may be for ever happy, (if it is not your own fault) and how you may avoid the danger and miſery which you and all men are expoſed to, who are

not very ſeriouſly concerned for their own ſafety.—For once and again I muſt tell you, as certain as there is a God, that you and every man living ſhall be happy or miſerable when they die. We therefore (knowing theſe things,—and that we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of God, and receive a ſentence according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad): We knowing theſe things, endeavour to perſuade men to be afraid for themſelves, and to live here ſo as to eſcape being miſerable hereafter.

What therefore I would recommend to you at preſent, (for I would not overburden your memory at once) is this,—That you would pray to God to give you an heart diſpoſed to hearken to the truth: for he has promiſed to enlighten the underſtanding, and open the hearts, of thoſe who humbly and devoutly pray to him for his direction and aſſiſtance.

Neg. I hope I ſhall follow your advice; and I believe I ſhall hardly forget the things you have told me.

Min. Farewel for the preſent; and may God keep you in this good diſpoſition, and give you a teachable temper!

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTION II.

Of the Corruption of our Nature.

NEGRO.

I AM come again, kind Sir, for your further inſtruction. Your laſt words have made me very thoughtful and uneaſy, when you told me with ſo much earneſtneſs,—That happineſs or miſery will be the certain portion of every one after death.

Min. I told you nothing but the truth; and I am not ſorry for your uneaſineſs;—ſince that may prove the greateſt bleſſing of your life.

Neg. I do not underſtand how that can be.

Min. But this you can eaſily underſtand,—That they who are whole, and think themſelves in no danger, will not look out for help; but they that are ſick will be glad of advice, and will be apt to follow it;—when once you think that you are an ignorant, helpleſs, ſinful creature, incapable of either knowing or doing the will of your Maker, or of reconciling yourſelf

yourſelf to him, whenever you have offended him.

Beſides, I muſt tell you another truth, —That the more you are afraid for yourſelf, the more will the great God be diſpoſed to pity you, and to deliver you from the danger you are juſtly afraid of, and to enable you to attain the end for which you were made, and ſent into the world.

Neg. Will you be pleaſed to let me know why God made us, and ſent us into the world?

Min. God made man, that he might have a creature upon earth endued with reaſon, and capable of adoring his Maker, and of imitating his perfections; and fit to partake of his bounty and happineſs.

Neg. Pray what is the happineſs you ſpeak of?

Min. It is the happineſs of going to a place of perfect knowledge, goodneſs, love, joy, and peace, which is to laſt for ever.

As nothing is more deſirable than life, nothing ſhould more forcibly work upon human nature, than the hopes of everlaſting life.

Which life God himſelf has ſet forth to us by all ſuch things as we are moſt commonly affected with:—As a crown,—a kingdom,—a treaſure, an inheritance undefiled,

undefiled, that fadeth not away;—and a—ſtate of everlaſting joy and pleaſure.

Neg. If God deſigned men for this happineſs, how came they to forfeit their title to it?

Min. They do it by being guilty of ſin; that is,—by breaking the law which God has given them.

Neg. Has God given us any law?

Min. Yes, ſurely.—He has given you and all men reaſon, which is inſtead of a written law or rule, by which you ought to live, and may, in ſome meaſure, know what is good, and what is evil;—what will pleaſe, and what will diſpleaſe, an holy, juſt, and good God.

Neg. But it is too plain, that people do not always obſerve this rule or law.

Min. It is ſo, and that is their ſin, by which they diſpleaſe God, and debar themſelves of his greater favours, and are in danger of being miſerable, even beyond what they can imagine.

Neg. But is not this the caſe of many chriſtians, as well as of us?

Min. It is ſurely ſo,—and they muſt ſuffer ſeverely for it; God having given them plainer rules, and greater helps, to overcome and cure that corruption of nature, which is one great occaſion of all the wickedneſs which we ſee in the world.

Neg.

Neg. Pray what do you mean by the corruption of our nature?

Min. That I will tell you;—and what your own reaſon and experience muſt acknowledge to be true.—By the corruption of nature we mean, a ſtrong inclination to evil, which we not only ſee and blame in other people, but very ſenſibly feel in ourſelves; that is,—ſomething within us, which oppoſeth our reaſon (and the other laws which God has given us); ſo that we are often tempted and prevailed upon, to do what our own judgment condemns us for, at the time of doing it.

Neg. This indeed is too plainly the caſe.—Men follow not their reaſon, but their paſſions, their inclinations, and their own perverſe wills; and which too often they have cauſe to repent of.

Min. You cannot but have obſerved,—that this inclination to evil is often ſo violent, that men commit all iniquity with greedineſs; and this is the occaſion of all the wickedneſs which we ſee and hear of;—all the cruelty, the oppreſſion, the pride, the injuſtice, the malice, the covetouſneſs, the lewdneſs, the impurity, murders, drunkenneſs, by which men diſhonour their Maker and themſelves, and are a plague to others; inſomuch that it is found neceſſary to have ſevere laws made, even

even by men, to hinder wicked people from hurting one another;—of which laws there would be no occaſion, if reaſon had been ſufficient to govern men; which ſad experience ſhews it is not;—there being too many, whom no reaſon, no advice, no proſpect of danger, no hopes of happineſs, can keep from ruining themſelves and others.

Neg. I confeſs there is truth in what you ſay.—But ſure this is not the caſe of all people.

Min. I muſt tell you,—that the wickedneſs of others ſhews us plainly what all men are by nature.—All men have the ſeeds of evil within themſelves, which would ſpring up and appear upon every temptation, if not hindered by ſomething more than their own reaſon; and they that are not ſo wicked as others, may be thankful to a power above, who reſtrains them.—And your own heart and experience muſt tell you, that ſuch as are not ſo wicked as theſe we have been ſpeaking of, are forced to ſtrive hard againſt the temptations they meet with, before they can follow what their reaſon tells them they ought to do or avoid;—that they are but too often unwilling to follow the light or reaſon which God has given them; and too—too often make uſe of it only to hurt or over-

over-reach one another.—All which ſhews, that our nature is ſtrangely corrupt;—ſo that no man can ſay he is free from ſin, or not guilty before God.

Neg. I muſt confeſs, indeed, there is truth in every thing you have told me.

Min. Well then, let this truth ſink deep into your heart; for, without the firm belief of this, you will never have any true notion of the goodneſs, juſtice, or mercy of God to men; nor will you ever know the value of chriſtianity.

Neg. But how man, the creature of ſo holy and good a God, ſhould come to have a nature ſo corrupt and diſordered, and prone to evil,—This, indeed, ſurpriſes me.

Min. Far be it from any man to imagine, that a good and holy God, who hateth ſin, ſhould be the cauſe of this corruption of our nature, and of the evil it occaſions!—No,—He made man at firſt upright, holy, juſt and good, and capable of doing every thing that became a reaſonable creature; but how he fell into this wretched and diſtempered condition, you ſhall know in due time.

Neg. But ſince ſin and wickedneſs are diſpleaſing to God, why does he ſuffer ſin and ſinners to be in the world?

Min.

Min. You do not conſider, that all men being ſinners, God muſt either ſuffer ſin to be in the world, or deſtroy all the men, women, and children upon the face of the earth.—But when you come to know the chriſtian religion, and what God has done to cure this great diſorder of our nature, you will find, that God can take occaſion from the ſins of men to ſhew the greatneſs of his mercy and compaſſion for ſinners; —and you will have reaſon to admire and adore his wonderful wiſdom, and mercy, and goodneſs, to all ſuch as ſhall lay hold on his offers of grace,—as well as dread his juſt anger againſt ſuch as deſpiſe his mercy.

And this is one reaſon, that I have taken ſo much pains to convince you of the corruption of our nature, and of the danger we are in on this account; that you may have no eaſe in your mind, until you know how to be delivered from ſo ſad a bondage, and the fears which ought to attend it.

There is another danger, which we are all expoſed to, and which you ought to know;—and that is, the power and malice of evil ſpirits.

Neg. What do you mean by evil ſpirits?

Min.

Min. God has made known to us, that there are creatures, both good and bad, which we call angels or ſpirits, and which are ever about us, though we do not ſee them, they having no bodies, as we have. —The good ſpirits are appointed by God, to take care of his ſervants;—and the evil ſpirits are ſuch as have rebelled againſt their Maker, and having utterly loſt his favour, ſtrive to tempt men to all manner of wickedneſs, that they may be as miſerable as themſelves.—And through their temptations the wickedneſs of the world was grown ſo great,—that God was provoked at one time to drown all the people of the earth, except one good man and his houſhold;—and at another time, to deſtroy ſeveral great towns with fire from heaven, for the wickedneſs of them that dwelt in them.

Neg. Theſe, indeed, are reaſonable proofs of the power which evil ſpirits may have over wicked men, and of the great danger we are in of being ruined by it.

Min. But it is neceſſary, that you ſhould know theſe things; for whoever is not a worſhipper of the only true God, whom chriſtians ſerve, is a ſlave to theſe evil ſpirits, and too often is a worſhipper of them, though he does not know it.—When you conſider theſe things, you will have

have reaſon to be concerned and afraid for yourſelf.

Neg. And ſo indeed I ſhall be, if this is our caſe.

Min. This is, in truth, the caſe of every one who is ignorant of the true God, and of the way which he has revealed to ſave his unhappy creatures from ruining themſelves, and loſing that happineſs which he has provided for ſuch as love and obey him.

Neg. I do moſt earneſtly intreat you, that at your leiſure you would give me an account of the chriſtian religion, which you ſay is the way that God has revealed to ſave all men from ruin.

Min. That I will do, through the favour of God, the next time we meet: In the mean while remember—what I aſſure you of,—that this life is the time, in which you are to chuſe whether you will be happy or miſerable for ever; and that your happineſs or miſery will depend upon your embracing or rejecting the offer now made you, by the great God, of becoming a chriſtian. You ought therefore to pray to the great God, to enable you to lay hold of this opportunity of being happy. And I will not forget to pray for you, that God would enlighten your mind with ſaving truth.

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTION III.

The Proofs of the Chriſtian Religion.

NEGRO.

I AM come again, Sir, to trouble you ſooner, I believe, than you expected. —You ſaid, that it was good for me that I was in fear for myſelf; I cannot chuſe but be ſo, ſince you told me, That my happineſs or miſery will depend upon my embracing or rejecting the offer now made me of becoming a chriſtian.—I own I am not ſatisfied with my preſent condition;— I am convinced by my reaſon, as well as by what you told me, that we were made to be an honour to the Being that made us, by living according to that light and reaſon which he hath given us.—For my own part, I fear I have not done ſo; and if he ſhall be diſpleaſed with me, I know not how to help myſelf, or make my mind eaſy.

Min. Aſſure yourſelf, this is the caſe of every thoughtful perſon, who has no knowledge of chriſtianity.—And therefore our great and good Creator, in compaſſion to thoſe unhappy men and women, who

labour under ſuch doubts and fears, has graciouſly pointed out the way by which they may be freed from them,—and that is, by embracing the chriſtian religion.

Neg. What does the chriſtian religion propoſe to us, to cure us of thoſe fears?

Min. I will firſt tell you in ſhort, and afterwards explain myſelf more fully.—In the firſt place,—It will lead you to know the true God, the maker of the world, and convince you of his great love for his unhappy creatures, and of his earneſt endeavours to keep them from ruining themſelves.—It ſhews us alſo how we muſt anſwer the end for which God made us, and ſent us into the world.—It ſets before us the dangers we are liable to, and teaches us the way to eſcape them.—It makes known to us thoſe laws by which God will judge the world, that men may order their lives accordingly.—It gives us rules to make us happy when we die, and promiſes all neceſſary aſſiſtance to obſerve thoſe rules.—It directs us how we may be reſtored to the favour of God, whenever we ſhall have been ſo unhappy as to have offended him by our ſins, which we are but too apt to do.—It aſſures us, That God is a bountiful rewarder of all ſuch as ſeek to pleaſe him.

Neg.

Neg. This is, Sir, a moſt deſirable account you have given me of the chriſtian religion.—Will you be pleaſed, as you promiſed, to explain theſe things more fully?

Min. You muſt know then, that we are called chriſtians, from profeſſing ourſelves to be the diſciples and followers of a moſt holy and divine perſon, Jeſus Chriſt, who was ſent by him from heaven, to make his will and gracious purpoſes known unto men.

In order to this, he being a pure ſpirit, it was neceſſary, that he ſhould take a body like one of ours, that people might ſee him, and talk with him.—He therefore ſubmitted to be born of a woman, and he took the ſoul and body of a man, and in that nature he lived among men, and made known to them the things which I have already told you.—Particularly, he gave them a clear knowledge of their Maker; and by his moſt perfect, innocent, and holy life, what a good creature man was, when he was firſt made, before he fell into ſin, and became prone to evil, as he now is.

He told them, that he came as a peace-maker betwixt God and his rebellious creatures, who by their diſobedience had loſt

loſt his favour, and the happineſs he had prepared for them.

And in order to reconcile them to God, and to the duty and obedience which they owed to him, he ſaid theſe words to them:—That all ſuch as became ſenſible of their faults and miſery, and were willing to give themſelves up to the Son of God as their Lord and Saviour, ſhould through his merits and mediation receive a full and free pardon for all their paſt offences, be reſtored again to his favour, and obtain that happineſs which they had loſt by their offences.

Neg. Theſe are indeed wonderful proofs of the great goodneſs of God.

Min. But then you are to know, that all ſuch as deſpiſe this ſurpriſing goodneſs of God, are not only to be deprived of his favour, but are to be puniſhed with torments great beyond all we can now imagine. For you muſt never forget what I told you before, and what Jeſus Chriſt has aſſured us of, That this ſhort life is only a paſſage to another, which is to laſt for ever; and where every man is to be rewarded or puniſhed according to his behaviour in this world.

Neg. I have not forgot that.—But give me leave, Sir, to aſk you one queſtion:—How are you chriſtians ſure,—that this

great perſon was the Son of God, and came from him to tell us theſe things?

Min. It is neceſſary, that every one, who intends to be a chriſtian, ſhould have the greateſt aſſurance of it; for on this truth the chriſtian religion is founded.

You muſt know then, that this divine perſon, in order to give men all poſſible aſſurance, that he was what he declared himſelf to be, performed before their eyes ſuch wonderful works, as ſhewed that in him dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily. — For example, — he healed all manner of ſickneſs and diſeaſes with a word of his mouth.—He gave ſight to ſuch as were born blind.—To ſuch as were dumb and deaf, he gave the power of ſpeech and hearing;—and he made the lame to walk. He fed and ſatisfied the hunger of many thouſands of people more than once, with a few loaves and ſmall fiſhes, which they ſaw multiplied before their eyes, ſo that thouſands were at one time all eye-witneſſes of this miracle.—He commanded the winds, the ſtorms, and the ſeas, and they obeyed his word. He raiſed to life thoſe that had for ſome time been dead.—He convinced thoſe with whom he converſed, that he knew the very thoughts of their hearts, which none but God can do. Laſtly,—the great God him-

ſelf

ſelf did more than once, by a voice from heaven, declare, That he was his beloved Son; and commanded, that as ſuch he ſhould be heard and obeyed.

Neg. Indeed theſe are moſt ſure proofs, that this divine perſon was what he ſaid he was; and that whatever he taught muſt be true.

Min. But I have other things to tell you, in order to confirm your faith or belief in this divine perſon, and his meſſage. Amongſt many other things, which he foretold his followers, this ſtrange thing was one;—that notwithſtanding the wonderful works which he had done before their eyes, his enemies would put him to death; but that within three days he would riſe again to life. Accordingly, after they had treated him with all the evil uſage that ſpite and malice could invent, they did moſt barbarouſly murder and crucify him. And after three days he roſe again from the dead, and talked with his diſciples and followers, with not leſs than five hundred at one time, many of whom lived very long after, and bore witneſs of his reſurrection, and were put to death for it.

Neg. I cannot forbear aſking you, Why did God ſuffer thoſe wicked men to murder one ſent by himſelf? And I ſhould alſo be glad to know ſome more things

relating to ſo divine, holy, and wonderful a perſon.

Min. That you ſhall know hereafter. In the mean time, I muſt proceed to tell you, that after having converſed with his diſciples many weeks, and in the ſight of many of them, he aſcended into heaven. But before his departure from them, he promiſed them, that he and his Father would ſend another divine perſon, (not in the form or faſhion of a man) but as a pure ſpirit, to dwell in them, to guide and comfort, to inſpire them with all truths neceſſary to be known by them, and to enable them, for the confirmation of ſuch truths to others, to do all ſuch mighty works as he had done among them: according to which promiſe, ten days after he went up to heaven, that divine Spirit came down upon them after a moſt wonderful manner, and enabled them to underſtand and ſpeak all the languages of the then known world, to which they went in order to carry thoſe good tidings; whereby we, and many other nations, were brought out of error, ignorance, and darkneſs, into the clear light and true knowledge of God, and of his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, and of that holy Spirit, which enabled them to preach this joyful doctrine to all the world:—That Chriſt has made

our peace with God, if we ſubmit to be governed by him, and by his laws, and put our truſt in him.

Neg. Well, Sir, you have given ſome eaſe to my mind.—I believe, that what this holy perſon ſaid muſt be certainly true; and I ſuppoſe all that know theſe things, are chriſtians.

Min. Indeed they are not; and you will not wonder at it, when you conſider what it is that hinders people from being chriſtians.—There are many who never think of their Maker, or what muſt become of them when they die.—Many indeed hear theſe things, but their affections are ſo ſet upon this world, its pleaſures and profits, that they do not lay them ſeriouſly to heart.—And too many are ſo fond of their own bad ways, to which they have been long accuſtomed, that they ſee not the truth of what is propoſed to them.—Beſides all this,—the apoſtles taught many things, which wicked people would not hear with patience: for example, — that murderers, drunkards, adulterers, oppreſſors, covetous perſons, the proud, malicious, and revengeful people, all lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God,—that all ſuch who were guilty of thoſe things, muſt forſake them, in order to become chriſtians.

Neg. Well, Sir, I am convinced that notwithſtanding the proofs of the truth of the chriſtian religion, there might be people who would not become chriſtians. —But I ſhould be very thankful, if you would let me know, how the chriſtian religion did prevail at the time the apoſtles of Chriſt made it known to all nations?

Min. That you ſhall know, when you come again to me.—In the mean while, forget not to beg of God to give you an heart always diſpoſed to receive the truth.

INSTRUCTION IV.

The wonderful Succeſs of the Goſpel, when it was firſt preached to the World.

NEGRO.

WHEN I left you laſt, Sir, you promiſed to let me know what followed the deſcent or coming down of that holy Spirit upon Chriſt's Apoſtles; and how the chriſtian religion was received in the world.

Min. You muſt know then, that when this happened, there were people out of all

all nations at Jeruſalem, the city to which they were come to worſhip the great God. Now when all theſe heard the apoſtles of Chriſt (who before that time knew no language but their own) declaring the wonderful works of God, in the language of every nation then preſent, they were aſtoniſhed; and being convinced, that ſuch men muſt have been divinely inſpired, they therefore gave heed to them, while they declared God's moſt gracious purpoſes—of mercy, pardon, and happineſs, to all ſuch as would obey the meſſage he had ſent to them by his Son; inſomuch that no leſs than three thouſand embraced the chriſtian religion that very day, and five thouſand more, immediately after; and theſe converts became ſo many witneſſes of theſe wonderful things, to the ſeveral nations from whence they came thither to worſhip. After this, the Apoſtles went into all nations, making known this joyful meſſage of God to men, that he would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, or the chriſtian faith; that he was ready to be reconciled to all ſuch as had offended him; and that he would make them happy for ever, if they would be perſuaded to forſake their evil ways, and be governed by ſuch rules as Jeſus Chriſt

had given them. So that in all nations, all ſuch perſons as were truly concerned for themſelves, and diſpoſed to receive the truth, became chriſtians; and very great was their number every where. And indeed Chriſt himſelf foretold it would be ſo; though at that time it ſeemed the moſt unlikely thing in the world, that all nations ſhould receive a religion oppoſed by their rulers, upon the preaching of a few poor ſtrangers, who had no worldly power, riches or learning, to induce people to believe and follow them; and who at the ſame time required all men to forſake the cuſtoms and religion of their forefathers, to reſtrain their appetites, and govern their paſſions, to leave their wicked ways of living, and to lead ſober, honeſt, and good lives, and to ſuffer death, rather than deny the truths they told them: now does not the miraculous ſucceſs they met with, in propagating ſuch a religion, ſhew it to be the work of the great God?

Neg. Pray, Sir, what became of theſe apoſtles after this?

Min. As they had taught all others to ſuffer death, rather than deny the truths which they had received from God by Jeſus Chriſt, ſo they themſelves laid down their lives for thoſe truths they had preached.

ed. But before they ſuffered, they appointed others to ſucceed them in publiſhing theſe truths to all nations; by which chriſtianity has continued unto this day; and we are aſſured by Chriſt himſelf, will continue unto the world's end. And a very great change for the better has been made in all nations where it has been received.

Neg. You will oblige me, if you will let me know in what the world is become better by this religion?

Min. In the firſt place, they who then embraced the chriſtian religion profeſſed, that they were ſtrangers in this world, and therefore looked upon this life only as a journey to a much better, which they expected after death. This made them content with any condition, which God ſhould think fit to place them in. This kept them from being covetous, or overmuch concerned for the things of this world; which too often makes men unjuſt and wicked. They believed, that if they were poor, or in miſery, God would make them ample amends in the next life, for what they had ſuffered in this. Their great rule given them by Chriſt was this, That they ſhould deal with all others, as they themſelves would deſire to be dealt with. This made them very juſt in all-

their actions, and careful not to wrong or oppreſs any perſon. Stealing, cheating, and lying, were not ſo much as known among them. Their religion obliged them to be at peace with all men as much as poſſible. So that quarrels, and wars, and murders, they utterly abhorred. On the contrary, they were kind and compaſſionate even to their enemies; never returning evil for evil. They had always a tender compaſſion for ſuch as were in want, or in miſery; clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and lodging the ſtranger, according to their ability. As to themſelves, they were very ſober, not given to gluttony or drunkenneſs, which they knew God would be highly diſpleaſed with. They were chaſte and modeſt, both men and women; all kept ſtrictly to their own wives and huſbands, as God had appointed, who had declared, that no adulterer or whoremonger muſt hope for heaven or happineſs. Laſtly, they ſuffered all manner of torments, and even death itſelf, rather than they would renounce the religion which they had embraced, on a full conviction that it came from God.

Neg. Indeed, Sir, this is a moſt wonderful account of thoſe who firſt profeſſed the chriſtian religion. One cannot ſurely imagine,

imagine, that ſuch good men ſhould have any enemies.

Min. But indeed they had, and very many; for thoſe evil ſpirits, which I told you of before, tempted all ſorts of wicked people to deſtroy them, and their religion, if poſſible; and would certainly have done it, but that the great and all-powerful God hindered it, and cauſed, that the more it was perſecuted, the more it increaſed. All ſuch as had been brought up in any other religion, became their mortal enemies, eſpecially ſuch as worſhipped idols, falſe Gods, or evil ſpirits, which the greateſt part of the world then did, and too many do to this day. Beſides theſe, men of wicked lives hated and perſecuted thoſe who profeſſed the chriſtian religion, becauſe they declared, that God would moſt ſurely call them to an account, and adjudge them to a miſery that would never end, if they did not forſake their ſins, and lead better lives.

On theſe, and on many other accounts, chriſtians where every where perſecuted, and vaſt numbers were moſt barbarouſly murdered; which grievous ſufferings they patiently endured, in a full aſſurance of a better life, which God, who cannot deceive them, had promiſed.

Neg. Pray, Sir, are chriſtians ſtill uſed after this cruel manner?

Min. No:—For in time the kings and princes of the world became chriſtians; and when they favoured and protected that religion, their ſubjects followed their example, though it was not always in order to ſave their ſouls, but for other unworthy and worldly ends.—And it was then, that many began to call themſelves chriſtians, who in their hearts and lives were far from being ſuch:—By which chriſtianity became extremely corrupted, and men outwardly profeſſed the chriſtian religion, at the ſame time as they lived in thoſe ſins, which it forbids on pain of damnation.

Notwithſtanding this, the chriſtian religion, where it is truly profeſſed, is ſtill the ſame; and is the only method of reſtoring men to the favour of God, and bringing them to the happineſs which we all wiſh to enjoy.

We have the ſame juſt and holy God to worſhip, that thoſe firſt chriſtians had; a God who loveth the good and pious, and hateth the wicked; who will moſt ſurely call all men to an account, judge them according to their works, and reward or puniſh them as they have deſerved.—So that every man, who has any concern for himſelf,

himſelf, and would eſcape the anger of an offended God, will not only be a chriſtian in name, but in good earneſt will live as a true chriſtian ought.

Neg. I moſt heartily thank you, Sir, for this account you have given me of the chriſtian religion.—Now one would hope, that if our people knew theſe things, they might be prevailed on to become chriſtians as eaſily as thoſe nations were, who firſt embraced chriſtianity.

Min. We may wiſh and pray for this; —but there are ſome reaſons, which you may know hereafter, that we fear may, for the preſent, hinder ſo general a converſion and bleſſing to your people; but a time will certainly come, when you will all know and worſhip the true God, the maker of heaven and earth, and his only Son, whom he has ordained to be the judge of the living and dead.—In the mean while, take you care for yourſelf, and beg of God, that you may not loſe the favour which is offered you at this time by me, one of his unworthy ſervants.

Neg. I hope I ſhall do ſo, and ſhall not forget what you have ſaid to me at this time. —And I believe I ſhall very ſoon wait on you again for your further inſtruction.

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTION V.

An Account of the Fall of Man, and what followed thereupon, till the Coming of CHRIST.

NEGRO.

I AM now come to mention to you one difficulty, which I beg you would explain to me:—How man, the creature of an holy and good God, came to have ſuch a ſtrangely diſordered nature, and ſo prone to evil, as we all by ſad experience ſee and feel it to be.

Min. I am obliged to do ſo; for without the knowledge of this, you can have no true notions of the juſtice, and mercy, and goodneſs of God.

What therefore he has made known to us in the holy Scriptures, is:—That after he had made this world, and all things in it, in ſix days, and that he might have creatures capable of praiſing him for his wonderful works, he made one man and one woman, called Adam and Eve, determining to make of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth; all which are the offſpring of

that

that one man and woman.—He has alſo made known to us, that theſe two perſons were at firſt made after the likeneſs of their Creator, being endued with reaſon, and other heavenly gifts.—We learn alſo, that theſe our firſt parents, being thus made perfect and good, and capable of living for ever, were placed in an happy ſtate called Paradiſe, with a promiſe of life and happineſs, as long as they continued obedient to their Maker's commands.—Now theſe two perſons were in a ſtate of trial, as we all are this day, though in a manner quite different from ours:—For they coming out of their Maker's hands perfect, that is, endued with clear and ſtrong notions of their obligation to perform all the great duties of life, could not well be ſuppoſed to lie under any temptation of violating that chief part of their duty.—It was therefore neceſſary, that ſome other act of obedience, ſuitable to the place and circumſtances they were in, ſhould be required of them, to prove what was in their hearts: and whether they would chuſe, under the moſt tempting offers, to break an expreſs commandment of God, their creator, preſerver, and governor, or not; even though the reaſon of ſuch a commandment was not made known unto them.—A command of this kind God was

pleaſed

pleaſed to give them; at the ſame time enforcing their obedience to it, by threats of a moſt dreadful puniſhment, if they ſhould ever tranſgreſs it.

How long our firſt parents continued in their duty, we are no where told; but at length, by yielding to the temptation of an evil ſpirit, and not regarding the command of their Maker, they did fall from that happy condition they were in; and, by that moſt grievous crime, (for ſo it appears by the puniſhment a moſt righteous God inflicted on them for it) they highly diſpleaſed God, who left them to themſelves; and having loſt their innocence, and that image of God in which they were created, their nature became ſadly changed for the worſe.—And the children which they afterwards begot, being born of ſinful parents, became, even like their parents, diſobedient, and prone to evil, as you ſee they are at this day: all which theſe firſt parents of mankind brought upon themſelves and their poſterity.

It was thus that ſin, and evils of every kind, and death at laſt, entered into the world, as the juſt puniſhment of their diſobedience to the commands of God;—by which all right to his free promiſe of eternal life and happineſs was forfeited and loſt.

Neg.

Neg. This is indeed a plain account how ſin and wickedneſs entered into the world, and we ought to believe it to be a juſt account, ſince God has made it known to you.

Min. As to the corruption of our nature, and the ſin that does ſo eaſily beſet us, your own experience will convince you of the truth of it.—And no other account can be given how it came into the world.—And you will learn by what followed this act of diſobedience, how diſpleaſing to God it was, and the puniſhment it deſerved.

Neg. Will you be ſo kind as to let me know what followed this ſad calamity?

Min. You will eaſily conceive how miſerable the condition of theſe our firſt parents was now become:—They knew that they had failed in their duty to their Maker;—their reaſon could not inform them how to help themſelves;—the loſs of their innocence, and of their Maker's favour,—their forfeiture of the happineſs they had enjoyed,—with their dreadful apprehenſions of that death which was threatened;—the ſenſe of theſe things would moſt certainly have broke their hearts, had not the goodneſs of God immediately interpoſed to keep them from deſpair.—For though his perfect holineſs could not but hate

hate the ſin, yet his goodneſs inclined him to have compaſſion on the ſinner; and from thence he took occaſion to make known another of his moſt glorious perfections, his infinite mercy.

Neg. I am moſt deſirous to hear how that was done.

Min. Why, as a remedy for what had been done amiſs, and could not be undone, their Maker was pleaſed to enter into a new covenant with them;—ſo that neither they, nor any of their poſterity, ſhould, on account of their diſobedience, be ruined, except it was purely their own fault.

Neg. That was indeed a moſt kind offer of their offended Maker: Pray, what was that covenant?

Min. It was this:—That on account of one, who would in due time ſatisfy his divine juſtice for their offence, (and take vengeance on that evil ſpirit, that had tempted them to diſobey his command) he would reſtore them to his favour, upon certain conditions, and would appoint them means, by which they and their poſterity might, upon their repentance, obtain his pardon, when they ſhould do amiſs, as ſince their fall they would be but too apt to do.

Neg. You will now be ſo kind as to let me

me know what followed this promiſe of God to his ſinful creatures.

Min. You muſt know then,—that ſome of their children and poſterity, keeping up a ſenſe of theſe things, and an expectation of this promiſe, lived in the fear of God. —But many others of them, through the corruption of their nature, became exceeding wicked; one of their own ſons murdered his brother; for which God, to keep others from committing ſuch horrid crimes, baniſhed him from his preſence, and he ſpent his days in miſery.

At laſt, wickedneſs increaſed ſo much, and became ſo general, that God was provoked to deſtroy the whole race of men by a flood, (except one man, whoſe name was Noah, together with his little family) as I told to you before.

By this good man, and his family, the whole earth was again filled with people, as it is this day.—And while his good inſtructions, and the memory of that dreadful judgment laſted, men lived in the fear of God;—but too ſoon fell into wickedneſs again:—And moſt of theſe, loſing the knowledge of the true God, fell into idolatry, a ſin which God principally abhors, as leading men into all other wickedneſs.

Neg. Pray, what is that ſin of idolatry, which God ſo hateth?

Min. It is the giving that honour and worſhip, which is only due to the true God, to his creatures, to the ſun and moon, and to evil ſpirits,—and to the images repreſenting theſe.

Notwithſtanding this,—God never left himſelf without witneſs; but gave continual proofs of his hatred againſt wickedneſs, and of his favour and protection of good men in all ages, and amongſt all nations, even to this day.—And thus it is,—that calamities of all kinds are brought upon earth; that one nation makes war upon another; theſe being only inſtruments in the hands of God, and by his wiſe and juſt appointment, for the puniſhment of their ſins.

Neg. Pray, had any of theſe nations ever afterwards an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the true God, and of the worſhip due to him?

Min. Yes, indeed they had. For the holy ſcriptures inform us, that—God made choice of a certain perſon, whoſe name was Abraham, and called him and his family from the midſt of a nation given to idolatry;—that to this man he made himſelf, and his glorious perfections, known; and for his encouragement to go

on in his duty, he promiſed,—that from him in due time the Deliverer of the world from ſin and death ſhould proceed, and that in the mean while he would make his deſcendants a great and numerous people; all which was made good in a moſt wonderful manner. His poſterity increaſed exceedingly; and wherever they travelled, they communicated the knowledge of the true God, and told men how he ought to be feared and worſhipped; ſo that many nations might have known theſe things, had it not been their own fault;—for God cauſed them often to wander, that they might make him known amongſt men, and cure them of their wickedneſs and idolatry.

It was in the time of that good man, that God ſhewed his hatred of wickedneſs, and his diſpleaſure againſt great and bold ſinners, after a manner the moſt frightful and aſtoniſhing.—There were ſeveral great cities, the chief of which were Sodom and Gomorrah, the inhabitants of which, through pride, fulneſs of bread, and much idleneſs, fell into all manner of wickedneſs; which provoked God to make them an example of his diſpleaſure againſt ſuch ſins;—for he rained down fire and brimſtone upon them, and utterly deſtroyed both them, their towns, and their whole land,

land, the dreadful marks of which are to be ſeen at this day.—At the ſame time, God, to ſhew his care for thoſe that feared him, ſent his angels, and delivered one good man, and his family, out of that fearful deſtruction.

After this, the children of Abraham, to whom the promiſe was made, multiplied greatly; to whoſe poſterity God gave very good laws and directions, how they might live ſo as to pleaſe their Maker, and not hurt one another;—and did moſt wonderful things before their eyes, when he delivered them out of a moſt cruel bondage; to convince them, and all other nations, that ſhould hear of theſe things, that the idols, and evil ſpirits, which they worſhipped, were no Gods; and that there was no God, but the God of this people.

Neg. Pray, what were the laws and directions that God gave this people and nation?

Min. The chief of them were theſe that follow:—That they ſhould neither have nor worſhip any other God but him who had done ſuch wonders for them:—That they ſhould not make any viſible image of him:—That they ſhould not profane his holy name:—That they ſhould keep holy one day in ſeven, to preſerve the remembrance of him, and his works:

—That they ſhould love and honour their parents:—That they ſhould love one another, as being all the creatures of a good God;—and neither hate nor murder any one:—That they ſhould not commit adultery, or be guilty of any lewdneſs:—That they ſhould not ſteal, or lye, or ſwear, or bear falſe witneſs, or covet or ſet their hearts upon what was another man's.—And, remember what I tell you:—The ſubſtance of theſe laws was given ſoon after the flood to Noah and his family, from whom all the white and black people now alive did come.

Soon after God had given his people theſe laws, he ſettled them, after a moſt wonderful manner, and in a fruitful land, which he had long before promiſed to Abraham their great forefather, and bleſſed them very much, while they obſerved his laws.—But even theſe people, whom we now call Jews, through the corruption of nature, often tranſgreſſed his commands, and were as often puniſhed, and upon their repentance pardoned; till at laſt, they growing very wicked, he let their enemies deſtroy moſt of them, their towns, their land, and their place of worſhip; and they are at this day diſperſed over the face of the earth, without any ſure ſettlement.

Now,

Now, a few years before this happened, the time was come, when the great God was pleaſed to ſend into the world that perſon or prophet, whom he had promiſed to our firſt parents, and who had engaged to make ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice, for their great offence.—But a particular account of this perſon and bleſſing, will take up more time, than, I believe, you have to ſpare: I ſhall therefore defer it till you come next to me.

INSTRUCTION VI.

JESUS CHRIST *the Mediator and Saviour of the World, and the Head of all Chriſtians.*

NEGRO.

YOU ſhewed me, Sir, when I waited on you laſt, how man came to fall from that happy condition in which he was created: and how he, and all his poſterity, became ſubject to ſin, to miſery, and to death:—As alſo, how their Maker ſpared the lives of our firſt parents, although

although they had deſerved immediate death, on account of one who had undertaken to ſatisfy the divine juſtice for their tranſgreſſion, and for the offences of all their poſterity, upon the moſt merciful conditions.—And I left you with a moſt earneſt deſire of knowing more of that ſacred perſon, who was to come into the world for that end;—and, as you ſaid to me, did come about that time, when God had, for their ſins, caſt off the Jews, whom he had ſo long, and ſo greatly, favoured and protected, above the nations of the world.

Min. I told you before, that that perſon knowing into what a ſad condition thoſe two unhappy perſons had brought themſelves, and their poſterity, by their rebelling againſt their Maker;—how dreadfully ſad their puniſhment would be, and what a very great happineſs they would loſe;—he, by God's moſt gracious appointment, undertook to ſatisfy the divine juſtice, by ſubmitting to ſuch ſufferings as God was pleaſed to accept by way of atonement for the ſins of men.

Neg. Pray, Sir, how did Jeſus Chriſt do this?

Min. As I told you before, he, out of love to his otherwiſe loſt creatures, took the body of a man from a pure virgin,

that he might be ſeen and talk with men, and in their nature be capable of ſuffering for the ſins of men.

Now, in that body, in the firſt place, he let mankind know God's great goodneſs, and his readineſs to forgive offenders, even the greateſt offenders, upon their repentance, and return to their duty; as alſo, how they ought to live ſo as to pleaſe God.—And by his moſt wiſe and holy life, and doctrine, and example, he ſhewed what an excellent creature man was, before he loſt his innocence, and fell into a ſtate of ſin,—as alſo, how hateful to God ſin muſt be, ſince ſo divine a perſon, which, you will ſee hereafter, was the Son of the moſt high God, was obliged to come down from heaven, to ſatisfy God's juſtice, and to ſave men from the puniſhment they deſerved.

After he had done this, enough to convince all well-diſpoſed people, that he was the Son of God, and ſent by him to declare his Father's will to men;—after this, that, as Son of God, he might make full ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice, he willingly laid down his own life, for his otherwiſe undone creatures.

Neg. I begin now to underſtand what before I did not, why God would ſuffer his own Son to be put to death by wicked men; and why his Son would chuſe to be

ſo

ſo dealt with, when he could have hindered it: I ſuppoſe it was becauſe he had undertaken the cauſe of ſinners, and ſuffered death to make an atonement for them, and to ſatisfy the juſtice of his offended Father, who therefore ſuffered him to be put to death.

Min. You underſtand it right.—And the great God, to convince the world, that his juſtice was ſatisfied by the death of this moſt worthy perſon, raiſed him from the dead, the third day after he had been crucified and buried; by which he was, in the moſt convincing and powerful manner, declared to be the Son of God; of all which the Holy Scriptures give us a particular account,—and, for our comfort, declare,—that God had laid on him the iniquity of us all; that he taſted death for every man, that is, for every penitent ſinner, from the firſt man that was made, to the laſt that ſhall be born into the world;—laſtly, that he has ſaved us by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Neg. It ſeems then, that we alſo have an intereſt and right in the bleſſings which he has purchaſed by his death.

Min. Moſt certainly you have;—for ſo he hath ſaid,—that the Gentiles, ſuch as were ſtrangers to the true God, ſhould be

fellow-heirs with his choſen people, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt.

Neg. Pray, what is meant by the Gentiles being of the ſame body?

Min. The meaning is this:—That you ſhould be of the ſame holy family with God's choſen people; and that as we are the creatures of one and the ſame God, and children of one and the ſame father,—and redeemed by the ſame Saviour, you ſhould now be made members of the ſame body, or holy family, which is called the church of God, of which Jeſus Chriſt is the head and governor.

Neg. I ſhould be very thankful, if you would explain that to me.

Min. You muſt know then,—That after the Son of God had by his death made an atonement for the ſins of mankind, he commanded his Apoſtles to offer the bleſſings he had purchaſed unto all the nations of the earth, in order to take out of them a people for the glory of God;—and to let all men know the merciful favours which the great God offered them by his Son, which were,—Repentance on men's part, and forgiveneſs of ſins on the part of God; and that this ſhould be preached in his name among all nations—And that all ſuch as would receive him as their Redeemer

deemer and heavenly maſter, ſhould be one family, called the church or body of Chriſt, becauſe he is the head of this body, and governor of this family, which is made up of all true believers in all nations of the world; that as he had redeemed them, he might protect, and govern, and keep them in the way of life and happineſs;—and laſtly, that the great truths of chriſtianity, and the holy Scriptures, in which they are contained, might be preſerved, being to be conſtantly read among them.

Neg. But, good Sir,—how can people of ſo many diſtant nations, be one family?

Min. They are all of one family, as they all agree in one faith,—and profeſs to be governed by one law of Jeſus Chriſt;—as they all engage to forſake the Devil, and all the ways of an evil world, and to worſhip the one and only true God;—as they all profeſs to receive the holy Scriptures to be the only rule of both their faith and manners;—as they all pray to one and the ſame God, in the name, and for the ſake, of the ſame mediator and advocate;—as they are all received into the ſame family, by one and the ſame ordinance of baptiſm; and are under the direction and influence of the ſame Holy Spirit; and as they all hope to meet together in the kingdom of heaven.

Neg. I think I underſtand you very well.—I ſhould be thankful therefore, if you would let me know what are the bleſſings of being a member of this family?

Min. The bleſſings are many and great, —ſuch as theſe following:—You will be enabled to anſwer the end for which you were made and ſent into the world.—If you enter into this family with a ſincere purpoſe of living as a Chriſtian ought to do, all your paſt ſins will be forgiven you; —and, if you afterwards fall into ſin, (as you will be but too apt to do) you will have Jeſus Chriſt an advocate with his Father for your pardon, upon your repentance, and return to your duty. Beſide this, you will be under the ſpecial care and protection of God;—you will have the Miniſters of Chriſt to inſtruct you, and God's all-powerful Spirit to direct, ſupport and comfort you in all your diſtreſſes.—You will have an intereſt in all the prayers and bleſſings of that family throughout the world; every member of that family being bound to ſeek the good of the whole body, to relieve the neceſſities of ſuch as are in want, or in miſeries, and to pray for each other.—Laſtly, you will have a moſt ſure title to eternal life and happineſs after death.

Neg. There is no man, ſure, who is

in his right mind, but would deſire to be a member of this family, if he could hope to do what will be required of him as a Chriſtian.—For, as I remember, you told me, that a Chriſtian has many enemies and difficulties to ſtrive with.

Min. That is true.—But then take this moſt certain truth along with you,—That a righteous and good God will not require any thing of his creatures, but what he will enable them to do, if they will but do the beſt they can;—every perſon, who ſincerely purpoſes to become a chriſtian, having a moſt ſure promiſe of being aſſiſted by God's Holy Spirit to pleaſe his Maker, and to keep his commands.

And, foraſmuch as we muſt be made holy as ever we hope to be happy, it is this good and Holy Spirit, that muſt aſſiſt to make us ſo:—Which he doth,—by putting into our hearts good deſires and purpoſes of pleaſing God, and a fear of offending him;—by convincing us, that nothing is required of us, but what is abſolutely neceſſary for our good and happineſs,—by helping our good endeavours, and defending us againſt the malice and power of evil ſpirits;—by ſetting home upon our hearts, the joys and happineſs that are propoſed to us, and the dreadful miſery which will be the portion of ſuch

as deſpiſe them:—All which that Holy Spirit doth perform in us by a ſure, though an inviſible power.

Neg. How can we be ſure of this, ſince you ſay he is not to be ſeen?

Min. Can you ſee the wind?

Neg. No.

Min. How can you be ſure there is ſuch a thing?

Neg. Becauſe I hear the ſound of it, and feel the force of it upon myſelf.

Min. Are you ſure, that you have a ſoul or ſpirit within you, which governs all your actions?

Neg. I am ſure of that, becauſe I feel ſomething within me, ſometimes telling me I do right, and ſometimes ſaying I now do wrong, according as I do what is good or otherwiſe.

Min. Yet you never ſaw that power; you are ſure of it only by what you feel.

Neg. Pray make that plain to me.

Min. Do not you know a tree by the fruit it bears?—Doth not a good tree bring forth good fruit?—Doth not a corrupt tree bring forth bad fruit?—Juſt ſo, when a good ſpirit governs any perſon, you ſee it plainly by his life and behaviour;—as alſo, when you ſee any man lead an evil life, you may be ſure he is governed by an evil ſpirit.

Neg.

Neg. I underſtand you very well;—and would be thankful, if you would let me know what are the fruits by which I may know a good ſpirit from one that is evil?

Min. The ſure ſigns, that the Holy Spirit of God governs any man, are theſe following fruits:—A love of God, and of men for his ſake;—Living in peace, as much as we can, with all others;—Forgiving thoſe that have injured us, as we hope to be forgiven our many offences againſt God;—A readineſs to do good to all men and women, whether friends, relations, or even enemies;—A conſtant endeavour to mortify our corrupt affections, our luſts, and evil deſires;—Being content with our condition;—Being humble, meek and temperate;—theſe, and ſuch as theſe, are ſure ſigns, that a man is governed by the Holy Spirit of God.

On the other hand,—The ſure ſigns of a man's not being governed by the good Spirit, are ſuch evil fruits as theſe following: adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, envy, hatred, and malice; a diſpoſition to revenge and murder, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch ſins as theſe;—God having expreſsly declared, that they who do ſuch things ſhall never be happy, but ſhall after death be ſhut up with thoſe

evil ſpirits, by whoſe wicked ſuggeſtions they had been ſeduced to commit them.

Neg. One would think, that ſuch as know the dreadful puniſhment denounced againſt wickedneſs, would never perſiſt in it, but immediately endeavour to eſcape from ſo dangerous a condition.

Min. They certainly ſhould do ſo;—but having wilfully forſaken the ways of God, they have grieved the Holy Spirit, and forced him to depart from them, and to leave them to themſelves;—ſo that their hearts are hardened, and their minds are void of underſtanding.

Neg. If I remember well, you told me, that all men are ſubject to ſin, even Chriſtians, as well as others, though they have received that Holy Spirit, for a principle of a new life.

Min. I told you ſo, and I told nothing but the truth; for ſo they are, until by that good ſpirit they are made holy, which is not to be expected till we die, and go to heaven.—I told you alſo another truth:—That a Chriſtian is not one who has no failings;—but he is one, who, by the power and favour of that Holy Spirit, watches and ſtrives againſt the corruption of his nature continually, ſo as never to live in any known ſin whatever.

Neg.

Neg. I remember you told me ſo before: And I am convinced of the truths you have now explained to me. And I muſt beg of you to let me know, what will be required of me in order to my being baptized, and made a member of that family, to which you have convinced me ſo many bleſſings have been promiſed by the great God.

Min. That I will very willingly do, the next time you come to me. And do you forget not to beg of God—to give his bleſſing and ſucceſs to ſuch as deſire and ſtrive to inſtruct you in the ways of life and happineſs.

INSTRUCTION VII.

Being an Abſtract of the former Inſtructions.

NEGRO.

KIND Sir, I am come to put you in mind of your promiſe to teach me, How I may be made a member of that family, to which you told me ſo many bleſſings do belong.

Min. I would now do it, but upon ſecond thoughts I think it will be beſt for you, that I put you again in mind of the things you have already learned, that you may be able to anſwer every one who ſhall aſk you,—Why you chuſe to be a chriſtian?—And that your faith being ſurely eſtabliſhed, you may be convinced, that it is your intereſt, as well as duty, to be a chriſtian; and that you may not hereafter become a ſcandal to that religion.

Neg. I heartily thank you for ſo kind a propoſal; and I will hear you moſt willingly.

Min. You have ſaid, that you are fully convinced,—that there is but one God of all the nations of the world: that white people and black people have but one God—who is,—moſt wiſe, powerful, holy, juſt, and good;—and who, after he had made the world, and all things in it, by his great power, made man, and gave him reaſon, that he might have a creature on earth capable of knowing and ſerving his Maker.

Neg. I do moſt firmly believe all this.

Min. How then do you think it comes to paſs, that ſo many people who have reaſon, are ſo far from being an honour to that God, on whom they depend for life and breath, and all things which they enjoy

enjoy or hope for,—that they neither fear, nor love, nor honour, nor are concerned to pleaſe him?

Neg. I have not, Sir, forgot the account you gave me,—how this came to paſs;—how the firſt parents of mankind came to fall from that happy temper and condition in which they were made,—by yielding to the temptation of an evil ſpirit, and breaking a ſtrict command, which their Maker had given them for a trial of their obedience:—And what a ſad change and diſorder was thereby made in their nature, and in the world, inſomuch that both they, and their poſterity, which inherited their corrupt nature, became prone to evil, and ſubject to ſin and death, and to all the ſorrows, miſeries, and afflictions, which lead to death;—and that this was the true occaſion of all the miſchiefs and wickedneſs which we ſee and hear of in the world.

Min. I am very glad you remember this ſo well.—For, indeed, without the knowledge of this unhappy fall of man, and the corruption of our nature which followed, you can never fully underſtand, nor truly value, the wiſdom, the juſtice, the mercy, and the goodneſs of God; nor would the chriſtian religion appear to you ſo great a bleſſing as indeed it is.

Neg.

Neg. You will be ſo kind as to explain this to me a little more; that I may embrace it with full ſatisfaction, and never forſake it.

Min. You will remember what I told you before:—That we know, and are aſſured of this, by a writing which came from God, of which we have moſt undoubted proofs, as you yourſelf have heard, and by which we are informed, how merciful God was in ſparing the lives of theſe our unhappy parents, which they had forfeited by their great offence, and for the ſake of his beloved Son, who undertook to ſee his juſtice fully ſatisfied, and to uſe all proper ways to make men know their faults, and bring them back to the duty they owe to their Maker.

That in order to this, his Son, who is called Chriſt, and from whom we chriſtians have our name, came down from heaven to earth, and was made man, and talked with men,—and declared unto them, how that he was a peace-maker betwixt God and his ſinful creatures;—that he was the Son of the moſt high God;—and a meſſenger ſent from him to make his will known unto men;—and that God had committed the government of all mankind to him.

All

All which God himſelf confirmed by a voice from heaven.—And his Son, when on earth, convinced all who were diſpoſed to receive the truth, that theſe things were true, by his doing ſuch wonderful works as none but God could do,—by the holineſs of his life, by the moſt righteous laws which he gave unto men;—and above all, by his riſing again from the dead, after he had, by wicked hands, been murdered.

Neg. All this I remember, and only deſire you will repeat the meſſage which this wonderful perſon brought from God to men.

Min. In the firſt place,—he made known to them,—that their happineſs or miſery would depend upon their good or bad behaviour in this world:—For that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world moſt righteouſly,—reward the good, and puniſh the wicked:—That as his juſtice could not let ſin go unpuniſhed,—ſo his goodneſs would not let his unhappy creatures be ruined, except they obſtinately refuſed to accept of the merciful terms propoſed to them.

That therefore God had been pleaſed, for his ſake, to promiſe,—that all ſuch as ſhould be made ſenſible of their bad condition, and would return to the duty which

which they owe to their Maker, ſhall have all their paſt offences pardoned, ſhall be received into his favour again, and be made for ever happy with him:—But that all who know this, and would not receive, and thankfully comply with, ſo kind an offer, ſhall die in their ſins, be ſent to hell, and be ſhut up with the devil and all the tribe of wicked ſpirits.

Neg. Will you now, Sir, be ſo good as to let me know the way which this wonderful perſon did make uſe of to prevail with men to embrace this moſt kind meſſage of God to men?

Min. In the firſt place, he ſhewed them what great love God had for his unhappy creatures, who were wilfully going on in the way of ruin, without perceiving it:—And that he was ſo good as to ſend his own Son from heaven to ſave them from deſtruction.

He told them further,—That the ſins of men were ſo many, and ſo great, that no leſs a ſatisfaction would be accepted for their pardon, than the death of his own Son; and therefore he had taken upon himſelf the cauſe of ſinners, and put himſelf in their place and ſtead.

And God, to ſhew men how well he was ſatisfied with his Son's ſufferings for the ſins of men, raiſed him from death, and

and ſet him at his own right-hand; where he liveth for ever, to make interceſſion for all ſuch as come unto God by him.

Neg. All this I remember, and I cannot but admire the great love of God and Chriſt for ſuch unworthy creatures.—Pray, have any other ways been taken of bringing men to know the duty they owe to their Maker, and of making them happy?

Min. I hope you have not forgot what I told you,—That after Jeſus Chriſt went up to heaven, he ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon his Apoſtles in a moſt wonderful manner, who appointed that family which we call the Church of Chriſt, as the moſt proper way of bringing men to the knowledge of the true God,—and of the duty they owe to him, to themſelves, and to all mankind.

For in that family he has appointed certain perſons his miniſters, who are to watch for the ſouls of men, as they that muſt give account of them;—to let them know what they muſt do to be ſaved;—to miniſter to men the means of grace and ſalvation;—to inſtruct the ignorant;—to comfort and help the weak, and raiſe up them that fall; to offer up to God prayers and thanks for all men;—and, whether white or black, to endeavour that all men

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may attain that happineſs, which Jeſus Chriſt has purchaſed by his moſt precious blood.

Neg. This I have not forgot: Nor what you told me further, that foraſmuch as God has determined to judge mankind according to their behaviour in this life, he has given to chriſtians certain laws and rules, by which they ſhall be judged to happineſs or miſery, at that great day;—and that theſe laws and rules are to be found in that book which you call the word of God, becauſe it was written by men appointed of God.—May I beg you to give me a ſhort account of that book?

Min. In the firſt part of thoſe ſcriptures, called the Old Teſtament, or Bible, we have an account of the creation of the world, and of God's infinite power, wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs in the government of it;—how in all ages he often protected and bleſſed the good, and puniſhed the wicked;—in order to convince men, that he ſees and ordereth all things for his own glory, and the good of his creatures.

In that part of the ſcriptures which we call the goſpel,—we have a particular account of the life of Chriſt;—his moſt perfect example;—his moſt holy precepts;—

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ſome of his numberleſs and wonderful miracles;—how he was approved of God to be his Son, and the meſſenger of his will to men;—how he was by wicked hands crucified and ſlain: That he died, was buried, and roſe again the third day from the dead,—converſed with his followers, and in their ſight went up into heaven; from whence he ſent down the Holy Ghoſt, who enabled them to ſpeak all manner of languages;—that they might be able to teach all men theſe wonderful things, and to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be ſaved;—and laſtly,—how great numbers of all the then known world embraced the chriſtian religion;—that is, all ſuch as feared God, and were concerned to ſave themſelves from that wicked generation, ſaw plainly, that the chriſtian religion was moſt agreeable to reaſon; and the bleſſings it propoſed to men, greater than all the world beſides could give them.

Neg. Will you be ſo good as to repeat again the chief of thoſe great truths, and the bleſſing you ſpeak of?

Min. The truths which concern us to know are ſuch as theſe:—That our life here is only a ſtate of trial, and a paſſage to a life either of happineſs or miſery, which is to laſt for ever;—that this happineſs

pineſs or miſery will be according to our good or bad lives;—that ſuch as have led the beſt lives, have done many things diſpleaſing to an holy God;—that the chriſtian religion, and that only, has made known to us, how ſuch as have fallen under God's diſpleaſure may be reſtored to his favour, and have all their offences pardoned;—and to live ſo as to be a bleſſing to themſelves and to others.

In ſhort,—the chriſtian religion propoſes a remedy for all the evils we are ſubject to, which we either feel or fear;—and is deſigned to reſtore men to that holy temper which is neceſſary to fit them for heaven and happineſs;—that is, to make them truly good, honeſt, kind, ſober, chaſte, and temperate, peaceable and uſeful in their generation.—And it will be their own fault, if they are not ſuch;—for this religion affords them all the encouragement and aſſiſtance, that they can demand or deſire.

Neg. You have, Sir, fully convinced me of the great bleſſing of being a chriſtian; for which I heartily thank you.

Min. Give God the thanks; it is he only can open your eyes, to ſee both your danger, and your intereſt.

Neg. If I ſhall not be too troubleſome, I would only aſk you at preſent, what an-

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wer I ſhall give to ſuch of our people as hall preſs me to tell them,—Why I am eſolved to become a chriſtian?

Min. After what you have already learnd, you can tell them with truth,—that ou found you wanted ſomething which ou had not in yourſelf, to make your nind eaſy, and your condition ſafe;—that our own reaſon convinced you,—that uch a creature as man could not be made, nd ſent into the world, only to eat and rink, and live and die, as the beaſts of he field;—that you had often wiſhed to know for what end the great God made men;—what ſervice they owe him;—whether the way you were in was pleaſing or diſpleaſing to him;—and often wiſhed o know,—what becomes of men after death.

You can tell them, that none with whom you had talked, could give you ny reaſonable ſatisfaction concerning theſe things,—until, meeting with ſober people among chriſtians; you have been convinced,—that you, and many other people nd nations, had loſt the knowledge of he only true God, who made the world, nd all things in it;—and that chriſtians have amongſt them a writing, which gives hem a full and moſt worthy account of he great and good God,—how he made

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of one blood all the nations of the earth;—what good and innocent creatures he made the firſt man and woman—and how they and their children came to be changed ſo much for the worſe, and ſubject to ſuch evil diſpoſitions, to ſo many miſeries and afflictions as now we ſee they are.—By thoſe writings you can tell them, Chriſtians are told how wonderfully good and kind God will be to ſuch as diligently ſeek him, and deſire to pleaſe him;—and that all who are not enemies to themſelves, may be as happy as their own hearts can wiſh.

You can tell them,—That God has made known in theſe writings, what men ought to do, and what to avoid, if they hope to pleaſe their Maker and their Lord;—what great happineſs they will deprive themſelves of, if they ſtrive not to know, and to do, his will;—for that ſuch as obey his commands will, when they die, be happy for ever;—free from pain, from ſorrow, from cares, from oppreſſion, from ſickneſs,—and that all wicked and ungodly people will be condemned to everlaſting torments with the devil and all wicked ſpirits.

If they aſk you,—how Chriſtians can be aſſured, that theſe writings and truths came from God?—you may tell them,—that if any man ſincerely deſires to know

God's will, he ſhall find ſuch proofs as ſhall convince him, that theſe writings, and the doctrines they contain, are from God.

If they tell you, that many Chriſtians live as if not one word of thoſe ſcriptures were true; you may tell them,—that all good Chriſtians are much concerned for the offence theſe give to you and to others:—That indeed they are no true Chriſtians, but ſuch as being unwilling to forſake their ſins, and reſolved to follow their luſts without diſturbance,—ſtrive to forget the truths they have learned, becauſe the remembrance of them makes them uneaſy;—and being by a juſt judgment of God left to themſelves, they have at laſt loſt all ſenſe of the dreadful puniſhment which hangs over their heads:—that this falling away of Chriſtians from their holy religion, and turning the grace of God, which teaches them to deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, into wantonneſs, is ſo far from being an objection to the truth of Chriſtianity, that it is an argument for it;—ſince this was foretold by the divinely inſpired penmen of the Holy Scriptures,—that there would be ſome, who would hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs,—and others that would draw back

to

to perdition, and quite forſake the holy commandments.

Neg. Kind Sir, your repetition of theſe things, for which I am moſt thankful, has confirmed me in my earneſt deſire to become a Chriſtian.—And I beſeech you, once more, to inſtruct me,—what will be required of me in order to be made a member of that family which you call the church of Chriſt.

Min. That I will gladly do, when you come to me again.—And may that good Spirit, which has put this good thought into your heart, keep you in this good diſpoſition!—And do not yourſelf forget to beg of God,—that he may perfect the good work which he has begun in you.

INSTRUCTION VIII.

Of BAPTISM, *and what is required from thoſe who ſhall be Baptized.*

MINISTER.

I AM glad to ſee you here again ſo ſoon. 'Tis a good ſign you are in earneſt, and ſincerely deſirous of becoming a chriſtian.

Neg.

Neg. Indeed, Sir, ſo I am.—You have convinced me, that it is for the good of my ſoul to be a chriſtian.

Min. I muſt not ſuffer you to be under ſuch a miſtake; it was not I alone that could convince you;—it was the good Spirit of God, who is always ready to enlighten the minds, and open the hearts, of ſuch as are in fear for themſelves, and would gladly know the will of God, and the way to pleaſe him.—I am only his meſſenger to you, and, I hope, for your everlaſting good.

Neg. I hope ſo too.—And therefore am now come to be inſtructed,—How I may be admitted into the family of chriſtian people.

Min. You muſt know then, that Chriſt, the Son of God, and the head and governor of that family, has appointed two holy ordinances, which we call ſacraments, to be of perpetual uſe in his church,—as ſigns, ſeals and pledges of God's fulfilling his promiſes of bleſſing, upon our compliance with the rules of our duty; and by which he has determined to beſtow his favours and bleſſings on ſuch as are worthy of them:—The one is called Baptiſm, or the waſhing of Regeneration, by which all that are well diſpoſed and qualified, are to be received into his church, which is

the family of all chriſtian people throughout the world:—The other ſacrament is called—the Lord's Supper, and appointed by Chriſt himſelf, as the way by which that family is to keep up the remembrance of what he has done and ſuffered to redeem them from miſery.

By the ſacrament of Baptiſm, God is graciouſly pleaſed to enter into covenant with his poor creatures, whereby he promiſes, on his part, to take them under his eſpecial protection, and to give them all that is neceſſary to fit them for heaven and happineſs, when they die;—and chriſtians, on their part, bind themſelves to become Chriſt's faithful ſervants unto their lives end.

Neg. Sir, you often mention our being God's ſervants, and ſerving God:—Does God want any ſervice that we can do him?

Min. No, truly: He ſtands in no need of our prayers, our praiſes, or our ſervices.—They cannot profit him:—But he having given us certain commands about our addreſſing ourſelves to him in adorations, ſupplications, and thankſgivings; when we obey theſe commands, (though purely for our own good,) he is graciouſly pleaſed to deem it ſerving, honouring, and glorifying him, though in truth we only profit ourſelves hereby.

Neg.

Neg. You will be pleaſed to let me know when and how Chriſt appointed the ſacrament of baptiſm?

Min. Juſt before he left this world, he gave his apoſtles, who were his miniſters, this command:—Go ye, and make diſciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt;—teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you.

Now here are ſeveral things, which I would have you carefully to obſerve and remember:—Firſt,—the very great neceſſity of believing and receiving the meſſage which God ſent to the world by his Son:—Secondly,—the neceſſity of being joined to his church by baptiſm, when that bleſſing can be obtained:—Thirdly,—the dreadful condition of ſuch as obſtinately continue in their unbelief, when the goſpel is preached to them:—And laſtly,—obſerve the very ſtrict command of Chriſt to his miniſters, firſt to teach, but then to teach only, whatever he has commanded; by which true miniſters of Chriſt are to be known from falſe teachers.

Neg. How is baptiſm adminiſtered?

Min. By dipping the perſon under water, or pouring or ſprinkling water upon him, at the ſame time ſaying theſe

words; I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

Neg. What do you mean by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt?

Min. It is for men, who through the corruption of their nature are not fit to be called the children of God, to be by this waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, born as it were again, made new creatures, and thus admitted into a new covenant, on condition of their ſincerely promiſing to believe and obey whatever is commanded in the goſpel of Chriſt, in the name of God the Father, who created them; of God the Son, who redeemed them; and of God the Holy Ghoſt, who enlightens and ſanctifies them.

Neg. Are all perſons capable of baptiſm?

Min. Yes:—Both infants and grown perſons.

Neg. What is required of thoſe perſons who are grown to years of diſcretion, in order to their baptiſm?

Min Faith and repentance; that is, to believe ſincerely all the doctrines of the goſpel, and to repent of all former ſins.

Neg. But what if he fall again into ſin?

Min. It is then neceſſary, that he ſhould reſtore himſelf to the benefits of his baptiſm by a renewal of his repentance.

Neg. But why are infants baptized, who are not capable of theſe qualifications?

Min. Though they are not capable of faith and repentance, they are capable of being admitted into covenant with God, as the children of the Jews were, by the eſpecial appointment of God, by circumciſion.

Neg. What is meant by uſing water with ſuch as are baptized?

Min. It is an outward ſign or token, ſignifying, and aſſuring us, from Chriſt himſelf, that as our bodies are made clean by water, ſo ſurely the ſouls of all, who are true believers and penitents, being thus dedicated to God, are cleanſed from all paſt ſins, and are put into the way of ſalvation, by being admitted into the church of Chriſt, and made members of his myſtical body, which is the bleſſed company of all faithful people.—And laſtly, we are, by the words uſed in this ordinance, made to underſtand, how our ſalvation is brought about;—that is to ſay,—by God the Father, who loved us, even after we had rebelled againſt him:—By his Son, who purchaſed ſalvation for us?

us:—And by the Holy Ghoſt, who ſanctifieth us.

Neg. Pray, Sir, explain this a little clearer and fuller to me.

Min. You muſt know then, that—the waſhing, pouring or ſprinkling water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, confirms and ſeals to the perſon thus baptized, the covenant of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins, of which covenant Chriſt is the mediator; for by him only we have acceſs to the Father.—We are born in ſin, and liable to the diſpleaſure of our Maker; but, by embracing and complying with the terms of the goſpel, we become children of God, according to the new covenant;—and by outward ſenſible ſigns, or ſacraments, are confirmed in the hopes of eternal life, the free gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:—But then remember, if you do not ſtrive to live in obedience to the commands of your heavenly Father, it will be no profit to you at all to be called the child of God.—Laſtly, by baptiſm, you are admitted into the hope of everlaſting happineſs, and to a title to the inheritance of the ſaints, upon your believing, embracing, and obeying, the gracious terms of the goſpel of the bleſſed Jeſus.—God will then treat you,

you, as a father does the child he loves: He will, upon your hearty repentance, and ſincere return to your duty, pity your infirmities, and forgive all your paſt offences. He will correct you in mercy, when you do what would hurt yourſelf; and will upon your prayers, for the ſake of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, give you the grace of his all-powerful Spirit, to guide, aſſiſt, comfort and ſupport you in the way leading to everlaſting life.

Neg. Theſe are bleſſings ſo very great, that I moſt earneſtly deſire to be informed,—what is required of perſons in order to their being baptized?

Min. After the promiſe of theſe bleſſings made by Chriſt, which he for his part will moſt ſurely keep and perform;—you on your part muſt promiſe, firſt of all,—

To forſake the devil, and all his works.

The world, and all its evil ways and cuſtoms.

And the fleſh, and all its ſinful luſts.

And you muſt promiſe—

That you will receive and believe the truths and meſſage which God ſent unto men by his Son, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures of the New Teſtament, and ſummed up in what we call the Apoſtles Creed, which you muſt get by heart, and mind every thing there ſaid.

And in the laſt place you muſt promiſe to keep God's ten commandments to your dying day, and you muſt get them by heart as ſoon as you can.

And here, as on one hand I would not diſcourage you, ſo on the other I muſt tell you the truth,—that theſe things are not ſo eaſily performed as promiſed.

Neg. I ſee I muſt give you the trouble of explaining yourſelf further: I ſhould be glad therefore to know what ſort of life is required of a perſon that is come to years of diſcretion, after he is baptized, that I may not promiſe what I do not underſtand, nor undertake more than I am able to perform.

Min. You remember, I hope, what I have often told you, that this life is a ſtate of trial; that God having prepared the greateſt happineſs for ſuch as love, honour, and obey him,—that he may make them fit for the reward he intends them, he hath determined to try their faith, their love, and their obedience.—Not that he is ignorant of their hearts, and their ſincerity;—but his deſign is by theſe trials to ſhew them to themſelves, and to humble them, by ſeeing how much they muſt depend upon his grace and help;—and to ſhew the power of his grace over the greateſt enemy of their ſouls.—He has

therefore permitted evil ſpirits to make this trial, by tempting men to the ſins which they renounced at their baptiſm.

Neg. I remember what you told me concerning the devil, and his evil ſpirits; that they were ſuch as rebelled againſt their Maker, and for that ſin were caſt out of heaven;—that their evil nature leads them to tempt and draw men from the true God;—and that God permits them to try the faith of chriſtians, and to execute his judgments upon ſinners.—Beſides theſe enemies of our ſouls, I remember what you told me, and what I find true by experience, that we have an enemy within ourſelves, even our own corrupt nature, very prone to evil; and that we have alſo an evil world, and evil examples, to lead us to forget, or to neglect God, and our own promiſe.

Min. I am glad you remember theſe things ſo well.—I muſt therefore now give you the neceſſary advice, which our Lord Chriſt has given to all ſuch as deſign to become chriſtians;—that is,—to do what all wiſe men will do, who have any thing of moment to undertake,—to ſit down and conſider, what it is to be a chriſtian:—Leſt afterwards you expoſe yourſelf to ſhame, and diſgrace the religion you profeſs, as too many do.

Neg. I heartily thank you, Sir, for this caution and advice;—and beg you will let me know the ſins I may be tempted to;——and how I may oppoſe and avoid falling into them.

Min. The ſins to which the devil and his evil ſpirits are moſt eagerly bent to tempt men,—are, firſt of all, to forſake the true and only God, to truſt in themſelves, and to fear and worſhip other beings.—This is called idolatry, and provokes God to give ſuch perſons up—to a mind void of judgment—to commit all iniquity with greedineſs.—This is the ſad caſe of all the nations of the world, who worſhip not the true God.—They are under the power of ſatan, his angels, and his agents; and ſo are you, until through the favour and mercy of God you are received into his church and family.

Revenge, and murder, that too often follows it, are ſatan's darling temptations; by which millions of ſouls have been ſent out of this world.—This is what you muſt reſolve againſt, as a ſin more eſpecially hated of God.—If you are injured or oppreſſed, you muſt leave your cauſe to God:—He, and he only, knows what puniſhment every injury and injuſtice require; and will call offenders to an account in his own proper time. It is true, revenge is ſweet,

ſweet, and tempting to our corrupt nature; but corrupt nature you muſt not follow, if you reſolve to be the ſervant of God.

Another ſin, to which the devil tempts men, is lying:—He is the father of lies, and would have all men like himſelf; becauſe he knows what God has declared, that ſuch as love and make lies, ſhall have no inheritance in his kingdom. This you will conſider and reſolve againſt, as you hope for the favour of God.

Laſtly, You muſt know,—that the devil hath his agents in every place:—theſe are men of wicked lives, and wicked principles;—who make a mock of ſin;—who fear not to blaſpheme that God, who can deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.—Now the Spirit of God has aſſured us, that converſation with ſuch perſons will corrupt good manners.—Here then will be your trial;—and you ought to conſider beforehand, whether the pleaſure of ſuch company ſhall prevail with you to neglect the counſel of God; which is, to avoid them, as you would avoid your own deſtruction:—Or whether you will run the hazard of being ruined for ever, by talking with ſuch wicked perſons.

The next thing, which at your baptiſm you promiſe to renounce, is—the world,

and all its evil cuſtoms and manners;—as alſo, all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh, ſo that you will not follow nor be led by them.

Neg. I am afraid, Sir, that without your inſtructions I ſhall not underſtand this as I ought.

Min. You will remember,—that this is not the world for which you were chiefly made;—nor muſt you look for any true and laſting happineſs here.—Now you will meet with many things in the world, which will tempt you with an appearance and ſhew of happineſs; and if you are not reſolved to avoid them, they will turn your heart from the love of God, and the care of your ſoul.

Neg. You will be ſo kind as to let me know what theſe are.

Min. The Spirit of God will tell you:—They are the luſts of the fleſh;—that is,—all ſinful, unchaſte, and impure pleaſures, and whatever leads to ſuch ſins.—Secondly,—The luſt of the eyes;—that is,—all ſinful and covetous deſires, and love of riches.—And, thirdly,—The pride of life;—or an exceſſive value of themſelves, accompanied with an unreaſonable deſire of the eſteem of the world.

Neg. Pray let me know more particularly what are the luſts of the fleſh, which I am to reſolve againſt.

Min.

Min. I will repeat to you the very words of God, that you may be convinced I do not tell you any thing but what will be neceſſary to your ſalvation.—Now theſe works of the fleſh are manifeſt; that is, they may eaſily be known by any conſidering perſon, though never ſo unlearned, to be diſpleaſing to a good and holy God.—Such are adultery, whoredom, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenneſs, hatred, malice, revenge, ſtrife, ſeditions, murders, revellings, ſtealing, ſwearing, and ſuch like.—Now however tempting many of theſe ſins may be,—you muſt ſit down, conſider, and reſolve againſt them, or never hope for the favour of God.

Neg. You will now let me know what is meant by—the luſt of the eyes.

Min. I told you before, that it is the eager and covetous deſire of riches. And that you may be convinced how dangerous a ſin this is, you ſhall hear what Chriſt himſelf has ſaid,—That it is very hard for rich men to be good chriſtians;—becauſe they are ſo much expoſed to many evils and temptations;—ſuch as theſe following:—They that have riches are apt to love them too much,—to put their truſt in them, and to forget their dependence upon God;—and to make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.

Beſides

Beſides all theſe,—wealth is often attended with ſuch cares as choke the good ſeed ſown in the heart of men, that is, the holy deſires, and good reſolutions, which are wrought in men by the Spirit of God, ſo that this good ſeed becometh unfruitful.

And though riches may be made uſe of to good purpoſes, yet it will require a more than ordinary grace of God ſo to uſe them;—which extraordinary grace is ſeldom aſked by, and therefore ſeldom given to, ſuch whoſe hearts are poſſeſſed with the love of riches.

Neg. One would conclude then,—that chriſtians ought not to deſire riches ſo eagerly as generally they do;—nor ought they who want them to think themſelves unhappy, or not beloved by God.

Min. That is very true. And they who will not be convinced of theſe truths, by what God has declared in his word, will one day be convinced by ſad experience, when it may be too late to do them any ſervice.

Neg. Well, Sir, I ſee ſufficient reaſon, why every one, who purpoſes to become a chriſtian, ſhould renounce the devil, and all his works,—the vanities of the world, and the luſts of the fleſh. I am alſo convinced of the great advantage thoſe will reap,

reap, who are able to overcome theſe difficulties. But then I am diſcouraged exceedingly, when I ſee ſo many, who have undertaken to be chriſtians upon theſe conditions, in a manner renounce that religion afterwards,—either finding it impoſſible to obſerve theſe conditions, or thinking that they are not ſo very neceſſary to ſalvation, as you ſay they are.

Min. Believe not this, becauſe of our ſaying ſo only; but becauſe the God of truth and mercy hath ſo ſaid, who would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and requires nothing to be done or avoided by chriſtians, but what is abſolutely neceſſary to their ſalvation;—and which he will enable them to perform, if it is not plainly their own fault.

As for ſuch as call themſelves chriſtians, but do not the things which Chriſt has commanded, you muſt not judge of the chriſtian religion by them, but by your own ſenſe and want of a redeemer. The chriſtians you ſpeak of have never truly conſidered the great danger they are in;—nor what the Son of God has declared:—That it were better for them, that a mill-ſtone was hanged about their necks, and they caſt into the ſea, than they ſhould be the occaſion of offence to well diſpoſed people.—And indeed, none ſerve the deſigns

ſigns of ſatan more than ſuch ſort of chriſtians;—and who have no other choice, but a true and timely repentance, or everlaſting miſery.——And repentance, one would hope, they would chuſe, if they would conſider the great patience of God, which ought to fill their eyes with tears, and their hearts with that ſhame and ſorrow, which is the work of true repentance.

Do but remember what I have told you before, that a true faith in God, and in his word, will enable you to overcome all the difficulties you can poſſibly meet with; and when you come next, I will ſhew you that Jeſus Chriſt has appointed an holy ordinance to be obſerved by all chriſtians, on purpoſe that they may always remember the wonderful things he has done, and the great bleſſings he hath obtained for them:—particularly the ſacrifice of his death, and the benefits which we receive by it;—the pardon of our ſins, and the ſure and certain hope of everlaſting life.—When, therefore, you come again to me, I will explain this to you more fully than I can do at preſent, for want of time.

Neg. You have ſaid enough, Sir, to make me return to you as ſoon as poſſibly I can.

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTION IX.

The SACRAMENT *of the* LORD'S SUPPER *explained.*

NEGRO.

YOUR promiſe, Sir, to explain to me an Holy Ordinance, which, you told me, all chriſtians are bound to obſerve, and have obſerved for a continual remembrance of the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt, ever ſince that ſacrifice was offered, this has brought me to you now, as ſoon as I could hope you would have time to inſtruct me.

Min. I have now time to do it.—You remember, I hope, what I have told you before;—that there are two eſpecial Ordinances of the chriſtian religion, which we call Sacraments, appointed by Chriſt himſelf as neceſſary means of ſalvation, when they may be regularly had.—Theſe are Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper.—By baptiſm we are made chriſtians;—at which time we enter into a covenant with God,—wherein, on our part, we promiſe,—to believe in him, to fear, to love, and obey him all our days:—And God, on his part,

part, receives us into his Family, which is his Church, and promiſeth to treat us as his Children,—to protect us, while we live, and, when we die, to make us happy, if we have behaved ourſelves as his Children ought to do; and thus we are made Chriſtians, or give ourſelves up unto Chriſt.

Neg. This I have not forgot.

Min. But then, foraſmuch as this high favour hath been beſtowed upon Chriſtians, to be called and treated as the Children of God, not for any thing they have done to deſerve it, but for the ſake of what his Son Jeſus Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for them;—he hath appointed another ſacrament, which we call the Lord's Supper, in order to keep up the remembrance of what he hath done for us:—His laying down his life for us to redeem us from the wrath of God, to purchaſe us to himſelf to be a people zealous of good works.

Neg. Why do you call this ſacrament by the name of the Lord's Supper?

Min. Becauſe our Lord Chriſt did appoint this Ordinance at his laſt ſupper with his diſciples, the evening before he was crucified, to preſerve the memory and the reaſons of his death; the knowledge of which is the foundation of the chriſtian religion,

religion, and that on which the happineſs and ſalvation of all men doth depend.

Neg. You will not wonder, if I am very deſirous to know all that is neceſſary concerning this Ordinance.

Min. That you may do ſo, you muſt carry your thoughts back to the firſt Parents of Mankind;—that they rebelled againſt their Maker's command;—that they loſt his favour, and all rights to the happineſs which he had promiſed them;—that their very nature became prone to evil;—and both they and their poſterity became ſubject to ſin, to miſery, and to death:—And laſtly, that the Son of God, pitying their ſad ſtate, undertook to redeem them,—to ſatisfy his Father's juſtice, and to ſuffer in his own perſon for their ſins; as alſo to give to them a ſpirit and principle of a new life, to mend that nature which they had ſo ſadly ſpoiled.

In order to which, he was made man; and having put himſelf in the place of ſinners, he offered himſelf to ſuffer death for their redemption, by which he reſtored them to his Father's favour, and put it into their power to gain the happineſs for which they at firſt were made.

By which wonderful goodneſs, and moſt worthy ſacrifice, God was ſo well pleaſed,—that he hath, for his Son's ſake, promiſed

miſed to pardon all penitent ſinners, and to make them happy for ever.

Neg. All this I now remember you explained to me; and I thank you for putting me again in mind of it, and I hope now I ſhall never forget it.

Min. It will certainly be for your good to remember it; for indeed your happineſs depends upon it.

Neg. Is it ſufficient for me to remember in this ſacrament, that there was ſuch a perſon as Jeſus Chriſt?

Min. No ſurely; much more is contained in it.—We are to call to mind his great love to mankind, which engaged him to take our nature upon him, and to ſubmit to the infirmities and miſeries of it, which made him content to live amongſt us, and to die for us:—It is to call to mind his unwearied patience and diligence in doing good;—healing the ſick, and inſtructing the ignorant; and particularly his moſt grievous ſufferings and death, by which he made an atonement with his Father for the ſins of mankind.—If we truly remember him, we ſhall ſtrive to do as he has directed us: He has told us, that we muſt never ſwear nor ſteal, nor get drunk, nor keep company with any woman beſides one, being a lawful wife.

Neg.

Neg. Where ſhall I learn the hiſtory of his life and actions, that I may follow his example?

Min. In the Four Goſpels, or New Teſtament.

Neg. What do you mean by the Goſpels?

Min. I mean four ſmall Books, in which the life and actions of our Saviour are written for the benefit of all ſucceeding chriſtians; and when it ſhall be your happineſs to read them, you will there find great reaſon for remembering of Jeſus Chriſt, and think you will be very ungrateful ever to forget ſo good a friend.

Neg. What need was there of this ſacrament, ſince it ſeems impoſſible for men ever to forget ſo great a benefactor?

Min. Jeſus Chriſt, who knew our nature better than we ourſelves do, and how very apt we are to forget the greateſt favours of God, has by this Holy Ordinance provided, that ſuch as have any regard for his love, or even for their own happineſs, ſhall never want a proper occaſion of remembering what he hath done and ſuffered to redeem them from miſery, and to put them in a way of being happy for ever:—He likewiſe intended this Holy Ordinance as a ſtanding proof or evidence of this important fact of Chriſt's death, thereby

thereby to ſtrengthen and renew our faith in it.

Neg. You will now, Sir, be pleaſed to let me know how he hath done this.

Min. Our Great Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, the night before he was crucified, took bread, and bleſſed and brake it, and gave it to his diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body, that is given for you:—Do this in remembrance of me.—After ſupper alſo he took a cup of wine, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of this;—for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is ſhed for you, and for many, for the remiſſion of ſin—Do this, as often as ye ſhall drink it, in remembrance of me.—For as oft as ye ſhall eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.

Neg. You will now, Sir, let me know how this ſacrament is obſerved amongſt chriſtians.

Min. They do it after this manner:—Firſt the miniſter of Chriſt placeth, or cauſeth to be placed, upon a table in our churches, a portion of bread and wine in the ſight of all the people.—This bread and wine, which are to repreſent the ſacrifice of Chriſt's body and blood, are ſanctified, or ſet apart, for this holy uſe, by

by giving thanks to God for all his favours, and eſpecially for having ſent his only Son to redeem us by his death; and by begging of him, that when we receive, and eat and drink this bread and wine, we may be ſo far made partakers of the ſacrifice of his moſt bleſſed body and blood, as to ſhare in all the benefits which he hath obtained for us by his death. At the ſame time he breaketh the bread into pieces, and poureth the wine into a cup, to repreſent unto our ſenſes by theſe outward and viſible ſigns, the death of Chriſt, whoſe body was broken, and blood poured out, upon the croſs.

Neg. Pray, Sir, how doth he, after this, diſpoſe of this bread and wine?

Min. This bread and wine, being ſanctified by the word of God and prayer, he diſtributes among thoſe who are there preſent;—putting them in mind, that Jeſus Chriſt died for them, and for their ſalvation;—preferring their happineſs to his own life;—that therefore they ought never to forget ſo great a kindneſs, but to keep up the remembrance of him, after this manner which he hath appointed, until his coming again.

Neg. Is this all that is required of chriſtians—To keep up the remembrance of Chriſt, and of his death?

Min.

Min. No, ſurely;—no thoughtful chriſtians think that alone ſufficient.—They know that it is an humble heart in which Chriſt delights to dwell;—they therefore look upon this ſacrament as a proper occaſion of humbling themſelves before God, and of deteſting thoſe ſins which coſt Jeſus Chriſt his life and blood.

They know alſo, that the bleſſings obtained for us by Chriſt's death, of which this ſacrament is a remembrance, are as much the food of the ſoul, as bread and wine are of the body;—that this food or ſupport we receive by a lively faith in his merits; and do therefore, at this time, more eſpecially acknowledge the efficacy of his death.—This is the true bread, which nouriſheth to eternal life.—That God who ſpared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, will he not with him freely give us all things?

Beſides this, every penitent chriſtian will look upon this as a proper time to remember, and comfort himſelf with, the great extent of God's mercy declared by his Son,—That all ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men.

Every humble chriſtian alſo, who feels in his ſoul the want of God's help to ſupport him againſt the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil,—will think this

is a very proper time to beg of God his on's promiſe,—That he will give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him.

Laſtly,—Every chriſtian muſt be ſuppoſed to receive this ſacrament in token, hat he acknowledgeth Jeſus Chriſt to be is Lord and Saviour,—to be his lawgiver ere, and his judge hereafter.

Neg. I remark, that Chriſt commanded this ordinance to be obſerved by his ollowers till his coming again: Pray, hat is meant by that?

Min. Why, as I have told you before, e chriſtians do know, and firmly believe, hat Jeſus Chriſt will come again at the end f the world—to judge the living and the ead;—to call all men that ever have ived to an account for the uſe they have nade of the favours which God has given hem; and to reward or puniſh them, as hey have lived well or ill in this world.

And this intimation he gave his followers, when He appointed this ordinance, hat they may conſider, every time they o to this ſacrament, what account they ill be able to give of themſelves, when e ſhall come to judge the world in righeouſneſs.

Neg. Is there any thing elſe required f chriſtians, before they go to this ſacrament?

Min. Yes:—They ought, in the firſt place, to conſider what ſort of life they have led ſince they were made Chriſtians;—at which time they obliged themſelves to make the Laws of God the rule of their Faith, and Life, and Actions:—and to examine themſelves, whether they have not led a wicked, at leaſt, an idle, uſeleſs Life;—or whether they now live in any known Sin;—becauſe they are bound, when they go to that Sacrament,—ſeriouſly to acknowledge their offences and ſins before God, and to beg his pardon, with a full purpoſe of amendment of life; otherwiſe they will receive nothing there, but their own condemnation.

A chriſtian is obliged alſo to have a grateful ſenſe of God's goodneſs, by conſidering his mercy in ſending his own Son to redeem us, whom by his death he hath reconciled to his Father, and put us in a way to be for ever happy, if it is not our own fault.

And laſtly, Jeſus Chriſt having expreſsly commanded,—That all his diſciples ſhould love one another, as he hath loved them and given his life for them,—every chriſtian is bound, before he goeth to this ſacrament, to conſider whether he hath anything in his heart, contrary to this pattern of true love, and command of his Saviour.

Ne

Neg. Do you believe, that chriſtians are generally careful to prepare themſelves for this ordinance after this manner?

Min. All ſerious chriſtians are ſo:—But too many, it is to be feared, are not.—And this is the reaſon why ſo many chriſtians receive no benefit from this ſacrament;—for otherwiſe, this ordinance would be a more powerful reſtraint to keep them from leading a thoughtleſs and an evil life,—by affording them ſo many bleſſed occaſions of remembering and renewing their covenant with God, laying them under continual obligations of leading a new and chriſtian life, and obtaining grace from God to do ſo.

Neg. What do you think of thoſe chriſtians that never go to this ſacrament?

Min. Why, they are generally to be eſteemed in the way of ruin, without ſeeing their danger.—They do not conſider, that, as they are ſinners, God cannot be pleaſed with them;—and that there is no pardon for ſinners, no ſalvation to be hoped for, but only through the merits of Chriſt's death, which is commemorated in this ſacrament.

Neg. But ſure, Sir, all chriſtians are not ſo thoughtleſs;—they muſt have ſome reaſons for neglecting ſo neceſſary a duty, as you ſeem to repreſent it.

Min. There may be reaſons and ſcruples for abſenting for a time;—but, generally ſpeaking, ſome of theſe following are the true reaſons, why men turn their backs upon the Lord's Supper, when invited to it, let them pretend what they pleaſe.

Either they live in ſome known ſin, which they will not at preſent reſolve to forſake;—or this world, its buſineſs or pleaſures, have taken ſuch poſſeſſion of their hearts, that they have no time even to think of their ſouls, or of what muſt come hereafter:—Or laſtly,—they delude themſelves with a faint purpoſe, that thus it ſhall not always be with them;—that ſome time or other they will make the care of their ſouls their great concern. But ſuch perſons ſhould conſider, that while they thus neglect one of the greateſt inſtances of God's love, they continue in a ſin which too nearly reſembles the denial of their Lord and Saviour: more particularly they ſhould reflect, that by perſiſting in ſuch a wilful diſobedience to Chriſt's poſitive command, they have no well-grounded aſſurance, that any of their prayers will be granted: for as Chriſt's death is the only ſolid foundation of favour with God, ſo his mediation is the only channel, through which it is to be conveyed to chriſtians. Whether therefore thoſe who

refuſe to commemorate the one, can lay any juſt claim to the other, is left to every man's ſerious meditation:——And they ſhould conſider with what face they can hereafter appear before their Saviour in judgment, whom they refuſed to remember in his ordinance here on earth;—it having been obſerved,—That whatever keeps a chriſtian from the ſacrament, after he has been inſtructed in the true nature of it, will, generally ſpeaking, hinder him from going to heaven.

Neg. Can a chriſtian know whether he hath gone to this ſacrament as he ought to have done, ſo as to hope for the bleſſings attending it?

Min. That will be beſt known by the manner of his life afterwards:—If a perſon went as a true penitent, he will be very careful of falling into the ſins he hath repented of.—If he was indeed grieved with the remembrance of his ſins, and the burden of them was intolerable;—if he did in good earneſt purpoſe to lead a new life, he will be more careful to beg of God to enable him ſo to do.—If he went with a lively faith in God's mercy through Chriſt, that faith will appear in a better obedience to God's laws. If he had a thankful remembrance of Chriſt's death,—the grateful acknowledgment of that invaluable

bleſſing will conſtrain him to live ſo as to pleaſe his merciful Redeemer.—Laſtly, if he went with a truly charitable diſpoſition to the ſacrament, he will afterwards make the love of Chriſt the pattern of his love for all others;—he will forgive, and give, and love, as becomes a diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt.

Neg. Will not the bleſſings which Chriſt hath obtained by his death, as repreſented by this ſacrament, encourage chriſtians to hope for ſalvation without amendment of life?

Min. Ignorant and careleſs people may delude themſelves with ſuch vain hopes;—but all well-inſtructed chriſtians ſhall know,—that though Chriſt died for the ſalvation of all, yet thoſe only ſhall enjoy the benefits of his death, who live according to the will and commands of him who died for them; that there will be no forgiveneſs of ſins without repentance, and a reformation of life; and that the ſtricteſt adherence to this or any other poſitive ordinance of God will not avail, without an earneſt and ſincere endeavour to perform the whole will of God, as it reſpects him, our neighbour, and ourſelves.

Neg. I cannot, Sir, but be very thankful for the great pains you have taken to inſtruct me, and to make me underſtand the

the nature and benefit of the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper;—and indeed, Sir, I am very deſirous to be baptized, if you know of nothing that ought to hinder me.

Min. I would not hinder you one moment;—but that I have one thing more to make you ſenſible of, before I would encourage you to be baptized.—And this is,—The deluſion, the danger, and the miſchief, of being a chriſtian without chriſtianity.

Neg. Indeed, Sir, I do not underſtand you.

Min. I will explain to you what I mean, when you come to me again.—In the mean time, I ſhall pray God to keep you in this good diſpoſition, and from every thing that may any way hinder your true converſion.

INSTRUCTION X.

The DELUSION, *the* DANGER, *and the* MISCHIEF, *of being Chriſtians without Chriſtianity,*

NEGRO.

MOST kind Sir, I left you with a very great deſire of being baptized; but you ſaid you had ſomething to ſay to me, before I was to be made a Chriſtian: For that reaſon I am come now to wait on you.

Min. To tell you the truth then, notwithſtanding the pains I have taken to inſtruct you, and to ſhew you both your true intereſt, and your great danger in not following it, I cannot but be afraid, leſt when you come to be more acquainted with Chriſtians, and inſtead of finding the good fruits which you might expect from ſo good a religion, you ſhould find amongſt too many, profeſſing that religion, little or no fear of God, nor any true concern for themſelves, or for what muſt come hereafter;—I cannot but be afraid therefore, leſt, ſeeing this, you ſhould be tempted to ſuſpect the truths I have told you,

and

and ſo either renounce Chriſtianity, or elſe content yourſelf, as too many do, with the borrowed name of a Chriſtian, and with mere ſhadows of religion, without endeavouring after that ſubſtantial holineſs, without which no man muſt ever hope to be happy.

Neg. I am very thankful for your concern for me, and I ſhall hear with attention the inſtructions you will be pleaſed to give, to keep me from falling.

Min. You muſt know then,—that the Chriſtian religion is intended by God to cure the corruption of our nature, and to make us happy, by making us holy, honeſt, and good;—by making Chriſtians the beſt neighbours, the trueſt friends,—the kindeſt maſters,—the moſt faithful ſervants,—the beſt huſbands and wives,—the moſt careful and tender parents, and the moſt dutiful children,—moſt faithful and obedient ſubjects;——and above all, the devouteſt worſhippers of the true and only God, and ſtrict obſervers of his laws.——Now my fears are,—That when you ſhall ſee too many Chriſtians live without any regard to theſe duties, profeſſing to know God, but in their works denying him;—I ſay again, I cannot but be afraid for you,—leſt you ſhould forget the promiſes you made to God, when you were

baptized,—and fall into the way of the world, which leads to deſtruction.

Neg. Pray, Sir, what do you mean by the way of the world?

Min. I mean, that ſad, but too common deluſion, of being Chriſtians without Chriſtianity:——That is, of profeſſing to obey the laws, and to follow the example of Chriſt, and at the ſame time leading careleſs and unchriſtian lives;—by which God is exceedingly diſhonoured;——the goſpel deſpiſed;—and too, too many deceived to their everlaſting ruin;—the ill conſequences of which can never be ſufficiently lamented:—For the poor heathens obſerving, that theſe people call themſelves Chriſtians; and yet ſeeing them corrupt in their manners, diſregarding the God they worſhip, and his laws;——minding neither his promiſes nor threats;—but having their hearts wholly ſet upon wickedneſs;—they, ſeeing this, do very naturally conclude,—that if ſuch people as theſe can think themſelves ſecure of happineſs in the next life, no one needs to be concerned whether he be an Heathen or a Chriſtian in this.

Neg. You remember, Sir, what I told you before, that this very thing had once made me reſolve never to think of becoming a Chriſtian; till you aſſured me, That ſuch

ſuch as theſe are no true Chriſtians;—but are either wholly ignorant of what they profeſs, or deceive themſelves with the thoughts, that there is ſomething in the very name of a Chriſtian, which may recommend them to the favour of God, and ſave them from his diſpleaſure, and their own ruin.

Min. I told you the truth, and what the Son of God hath commanded all people to take notice of;—That not every one who calls himſelf a Chriſtian, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but ſuch only as do the will of his Father, which is in heaven, and obſerve his laws.

Neg. I ſhall be very thankful, if you will let me know who they are that thus deceive them, that I may not follow them to my ruin.

Min. I muſt firſt tell you, that there are thoſe amongſt us, who, being wiſe in their own conceits, will not receive the Son of God as their teacher, nor his Goſpel as the rule of their faith and manners:—Now theſe do often lead into very dangerous errors ſuch people as do not know or conſider, upon what certain proofs the truths of the Goſpel are moſt ſurely believed amongſt us.

Neg. I hope my belief in the Goſpel is confirmed ſufficiently, both by the many

and wonderful miracles of Chriſt, and eſpecially by his reſurrection from the dead.

Min. But you muſt not forget, That your faith, and the increaſe and continuance of it, is the gift of God, which you muſt pray for, as ever you hope to be preſerved free from error.

Neg. Well, it is ſtrange however, that people of underſtanding in other things, who cannot but ſee how much we are apt to be miſtaken in the common affairs of life, ſhould, in things of the greateſt concern, wholly depend upon their own wiſdom and power, even where God hath undertaken to direct and aſſiſt us.

Min. You will not wonder at this, if you remember, what hath been ſo often ſaid and proved;—that ſuch is the corruption of our nature, that when any man, thro' a proud conceit of his own wiſdom and ſtrength, ſhall provoke God to forſake and leave him to himſelf, that man will be capable of believing and doing the moſt unreaſonable things, to which an evil ſpirit, or his own corrupt heart, can tempt him.

Neg. Pray, Sir, what other miſtakes are there amongſt Chriſtians, which endanger their ſalvation?

Min.

Min. There are too many, who, for want of attention to the good inſtructions which are given them, conſider not how they live, nor what will become of them when they die;—who know not the evil of ſin, nor the miſchiefs it has brought into the world;—how hateful it is to an holy God,—how ſtrict his commands are to avoid it, and what the portion of ſinners in the next life is to be;——and therefore propoſe no other end to themſelves, in this, but only to live and die as eaſy as they can.—Beſide thoſe who walk in darkneſs, and know not whither they go, and are ſecure, becauſe ignorant;—there are others, that are even afraid of being inſtructed.

Neg. That is ſtrange indeed.

Min. But it is true: And the reaſon is, becauſe, if we deal faithfully with ſinners, we muſt tell them that their deeds are evil, and that they are in very great danger, if they do not forſake their beloved ſins; and then they will hate both us, and thoſe unwelcome truths which condemn them, and their way of life.

There are others alſo, who have been better inform'd, and perhaps well-inclin'd; but ſuffering their hearts to be poſſeſſed with the love of the world, its buſineſs, riches or pleaſures, they loſe thereby the knowledge

knowledge and remembrance of the truth, and forget their good purpoſes, and fall into a way of living which the Chriſtian religion condemns, and which will be puniſhed with the loſs of heaven and happineſs. And there are too many, who, having not caſt off all fear of God, and concern for their ſouls, do yet content themſelves with a punctual performance of the external part of religion, vainly thinking, that an outward ſhew of religious worſhip will atone for the want of that inward purity of heart, which is indiſpenſibly required from every Chriſtian.

Neg. I would be glad to know, who this ſort of miſtaken Chriſtians are.

Min. Beſide thoſe already mentioned, there are many, who, though they know themſelves not to be in the way of ſalvation, make their minds eaſy, by purpoſing to repent, and be converted; fooliſhly ſuppoſing that repentance is abſolutely in their own power;—at the ſame time provoking God, who alone can give them the grace of converſion, to leave them to their own choice and deſtruction.

Others flatter themſelves, that repentance, and a change of life, are only required, where people have been guilty of great and ſcandalous Sins,—ſuch as murder, adultery, and the like;—not conſidering

ſidering that a man, who is innocent of great crimes, may be far from being a true Chriſtian, and in the way of ſalvation; the beſt of men ſtanding in need of repentance and pardon, and of the mercy of God.

Neg. I have heard, that Chriſtians do depend very much upon the goodneſs and mercy of God.

Min. And ſo they may, and ought to do, provided they do not deceive themſelves, by abuſing his mercy, which is intended to lead men to repentance, and amendment of life.

Neg. Pray, how do men abuſe this mercy of God?

Min. When they continue to live in any known ſin, or wilfully neglect any duty; and yet hope, that God of his great mercy will forgive them.

Neg. You have often mentioned the corruption and weakneſs of human nature. Will not this plead our excuſe, and prevail with ſo good and merciful a Being to pardon ſuch as have not done what he hath commanded?

Min. Yes: And he hath faithfully promiſed, that upon condition of their repentance, and amendment of life, (according to the Goſpel) he will pardon the greateſt ſinners.

Neg.

Neg. Perhaps they will ſay, that they are not able to perform theſe conditions.

Min. What would you think of one who ſhould make that an excuſe, and yet would be ſorry to be made able, only becauſe he is unwilling to part with his ſins?

Neg. Such an one, to be ſure, complains without reaſon, and his ruin will be from himſelf.

Min. And yet this is the caſe of all careleſs and wicked Chriſtians.——God would have all his creatures happy;—he knows that man can never be happy, till his corrupt nature be mended;—he has therefore, as I told you before, appointed the Chriſtian religion, as the moſt effectual means of our recovery from ſin unto holineſs.—By which we are taught to depend upon the almighty power of God, even that almighty power which raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to raiſe us from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs, by enabling us to ſee, to reſiſt, to overcome, and to root out, whatever is evil in us, and to reſtore us to the image of God, in which man was at firſt created.——Chriſtians, therefore, do but delude themſelves, and blaſpheme God, when they pretend they cannot do what he requires of them, in order to their happineſs.

And

And to name no more ways at preſent, by which men deceive themſelves to their ruin:—Very great is the number of ſuch as depend upon a death-bed repentance, for the making their peace with God, and fitting themſelves for heaven;—living in the mean time without God in the world, neither fearing his anger, nor regarding his promiſes.

Neg. Indeed, Sir, theſe are all ſad miſtakes; and I hope, I ſhall not fall into any of them.

Min. I hope ſo too;—but then you muſt be very humble, and always fear for yourſelf, and beg of God to keep you from ſuch miſtakes which are the ruin of ſo many, who yet call and think themſelves to be Chriſtians;—otherwiſe your being made a Chriſtian will not ſecure you from danger.

Neg. Pray, Sir, what are the things which are moſt likely to offend the good Spirit of God, and force him to forſake ſuch as are dedicated to him, and put under his protection?

Min. In the firſt place, Chriſtians do grieve that good Spirit,—by neglecting to improve the graces beſtowed upon them;—for, as I told you before, this is a rule of the goſpel,—That to him who makes good uſe of the favours which God hath given

given him, God will give more; and he that will not do ſo, ſhall loſe what he had.

Neg. I hope I ſhall not forget this rule of truth.

Min. In the next place, a Chriſtian runs the hazard of loſing the help and comfort of the Spirit of God, by returning into that way of life, and to thoſe ſins, which he renounced at his baptiſm;——eſpecially when he falls into, and continues in, any known and wilful ſin;—for then he will naturally hate God, and God will forſake him.

Neg. Hate the God that made us!

Min. Why, as monſtrous a ſin as you think that is, it is certainly true:——For any man, whoſe conſcience tells him, that he is always doing that which muſt offend an holy, juſt, and powerful God, cannot but wiſh there was no ſuch Being to call him to an account, and to puniſh him; nor can he poſſibly love ſuch a Being.

Thirdly;—Another way of grieving the Holy Spirit is by neglecting, which in Truth is deſpiſing thoſe means of grace, which Jeſus Chriſt hath appointed to bring men into, and to keep them in, the way of ſalvation.

Neg. I have not forgot what you have formerly told me;—That the hearing, and ſeriouſly thinking, of the word of God,

God, in which a Chriſtian's duty is contained, as well as the promiſes to encourage, and the puniſhments to deter us, is one of thoſe means you ſpeak of, moſt proper to convert men, and to keep them in the favour of God.

Min. And the others are;—The holy ordinances, which Chriſt himſelf hath appointed; the one to receive men into his Church, and the other to enable them to grow in grace.

Now, as the uſe of theſe means, joined with earneſt prayer to God, for light to diſcover what is evil in us, and for power to root it out, is the ſure way of preſerving the fellowſhip of the Holy Spirit;—ſo, when any Chriſtian, depending upon his own reaſon, wiſdom, or power, and forgetting that all our ſufficiency to do any good is of God, does neglect theſe means, the good Spirit will forſake ſuch a perſon, and leave him to himſelf, and to the deluſion and government of evil ſpirits; which, without a ſincere repentance, will be his ruin.

Neg. This, I hope, will be a warning to me, never to neglect theſe means of grace and ſafety.

Min. And I hope too, that you will never forget to give God the glory of all the good you do; for be aſſured of this,—

That

That neither the reaſonableneſs of any duty, nor the baſeneſs of any ſin, nor any other conſideration, can enable you to do what is good, and well-pleaſing to God, or to avoid what is evil, but only his grace, and that good Spirit, to which you are dedicated at your baptiſm.—To him you muſt apply for light to ſee your duty, and for power to perform it;—and to him you muſt give all the glory.

Neg. Since there are ſo many bad Chriſtians to be met with, I ſhould be glad to know who they are whoſe example I may ſafely follow.

Min. I would not adviſe you to make the lives and actions of other people altogether a pattern for you to follow; but always rather have an eye to what you believe will pleaſe or diſpleaſe God, and what you know he has commanded or forbidden:—Although good and bad Chriſtians may, for the moſt part, be known by the lives they lead, as a tree is known by its fruit.

When, therefore, you ſee men pay a great regard to God and his laws, honouring his holy name, and his word, and every thing belonging to him;—when you ſee them juſt, and kind, and merciful, and not given to revenge, but ready to forgive, and give and love, as becomes

the followers of Chriſt;—when you ſee them temperate and chaſte, modeſt and humble, and dealing with others as they themſelves would be dealt with;——you will have reaſon to take theſe for good Chriſtians, if you are convinced, that they do thoſe things out of love and obedience to God.

On the other hand,—If you ſee among thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, ſuch as make no conſcience of their ways, but lead careleſs, idle, uſeleſs, or diſorderly lives;—exceeding fond of the world, and its vanities;—and ſtriving to be rich and great at any rate:——if you ſee any that live in adultery or fornication, or that are ſwearers, drunkards, thieves, covetous, or oppreſſors;—if you ſee parents unconcerned for their children's eternal welfare,——huſbands and wives forgetting and breaking their marriage vows,—maſters and ſervants never remembering, that they have a maſter in heaven;—if you ſee men in power regardleſs of the honour of that God, whoſe repreſentatives they are; you may be ſure, that theſe, and ſuch as theſe,—are Chriſtians without Chriſtianity, and will be liable to a moſt ſevere judgment, for their oppoſing the gracious deſigns of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

Neg. Pray, Sir, what do you mean by that?

Min. Why, God is ſo good and merciful, That he would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now, all ſuch as, taking the name of Chriſtians, do lead unchriſtian lives, theſe oppoſe their Maker in his moſt gracious deſigns, bringing an evil report upon Chriſtianity, as if nothing good were to be got by it,—making the ignorant heathens to take that for Chriſtianity, which is far from it;—by which they hinder ſuch as might otherwiſe deſire to become Chriſtians;—they confirm unbelievers in their infidelity, and ſerve all the deſigns of Satan in oppoſing the kingdom of Chriſt;—and therefore muſt of neceſſity be more hateful to God, and their puniſhment be greater than that of the heathens, as much as they now deſpiſe thoſe poor people.

Neg. You have convinced me, Sir, of the danger of being a Chriſtian without Chriſtianity.—Will you be ſo kind as to ſhew me how I may avoid falling into ſuch a way of life, as, it ſeems, too many do?

Min. In the firſt place, conſider what a bleſſing it is, that you are not ſtill in darkneſs, but that you are come to the knowledge

ledge of your Maker, and of the way to please him; whereby you will be happy when you die, whatever your lot may have been in this world.

And in the next place, keep it always in your mind,—That this God, whom you have chosen to serve, is every where present, so that if at any time you offend him, you offend in his very sight a God, who hath power to strike you dead upon the spot.

Be careful to keep yourself always sober;—Drunkenness and intemperance disorder our reason, and make us forget our best resolutions, and the dangers which encompass us.

Do not set your hearts upon this world, its honours, riches or pleasures; for besides that you must soon lose them, they will be apt to make you forget what you will gain or lose by being a good or bad Christian.

Never fancy that any sin is small; for the least known sin, continued in, will lead to a greater; and if you should provoke the Spirit of God to forsake you, you will be capable of committing the very greatest crimes. Human nature, as it is now corrupt, is the same in all men:—We are all subject to temptations;—and if ever, by our repeated crimes, we should force

force the Spirit of God to leave us to ourſelves, no man can tell, no man can foreſee, what barbarous wickedneſs he ſhall be tempted to commit;—nor what unwelcome, unlooked for calamities, he may bring upon himſelf, while he goes from ſin to ſin, till he meets with deſtruction. —For no man continues long at one certain pitch of wickedneſs;—for not only one evil habit begets another, but the more a man ſins, the leſs capable he makes himſelf of judging what ſin is, and the dreadful conſequences of continuing in it. —And the influences of God's holy Spirit, and the gracious interpoſitions of Providence have ſtill leſs power upon his mind and ſoul, till he has quite forgotten his Maker,—till he has filled up the meaſure of his iniquities,—and till he meets with deſtruction, generally in this world, as well as the next.

Whenever, therefore, you are ſenſible you have done amiſs, delay not one moment to beg of God to pardon you, and to give you grace to do ſo no more.

And forget not an excellent rule which I have formerly mentioned, to direct you in moſt actions of moment:—Do not, at your peril, undertake any thing, which you cannot with confidence beg of God to bleſs and proſper you in.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, and above all, remember, what cannot too often be repeated, That without faith,—a faith which worketh by love, which purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and keeps the commandments of God, you cannot poſſibly live as becomes a true Chriſtian.

Neg. I beg you will explain what you mean by this.

Min. By this faith we mean a—deep, real ſenſe, and firm Belief, of the mercy and Love of God, for his poor fallen and loſt creatures, and his kind propoſal by his own Son to make them happy for ever.—This is that ſaving faith, which will lead a Chriſtian moſt powerfully to love God, and obey his Son Jeſus Chriſt, to whom he hath given all power in heaven and earth:—This is that faith which will puriſy your heart, will lead you to repentance, and keep you in the way to eternal life; and this is what you muſt beg of God, for this faith is his gift; and that he may increaſe it in you unto your life's end.

Neg. I hope I ſhall never forget to pray for ſo neceſſary a grace.

Min. As you can ſay by heart the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer, and fully intend to learn the reſt of the Catechiſm, I have only a few queſtions to aſk you, in

order to your being baptized, which you muſt anſwer (to God) when you are called upon to make a public profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

And firſt,—Conſider whether there are any ways of life, or cuſtoms, which at preſent you are fond of, which you will not utterly forſake, when you ſhall be convinced, that they are forbidden by God, or diſpleaſing to him.

Neg. I know of none which I will not forſake, in order to pleaſe God.

Min. Will you ſincerely devote yourſelf to God the Father and Maker of all things, that you may become his faithful ſervant unto the end of your life?

Neg. I purpoſe by this help to do ſo, and become ſuch.

Min. Will you, with the ſame ſincerity, devote yourſelf to his Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for whoſe ſake God has promiſed to pardon all your ſins, to receive you into favour, and to make you happy, if you continue to obey him all your days?

Neg. This I fully intend to do.

Min. Laſtly,—Will you dedicate and devote yourſelf to the Holy Ghoſt, that good Spirit, that he may, by his all-powerful grace and help, keep you from ſin and wickedneſs, and aſſiſt you in the way of holineſs and happineſs, that you may

never

never be a disgrace to that religion which you are going to undertake?

Neg. I will most thankfully dedicate myself to him, that, by his assistance, I may be able to please God, and do what I have promised.

Min. You will not fail to do so, if you often consider, that your everlasting happiness or misery will depend upon your observing or neglecting the vows and promises you make at your baptism.

And if, to this, you add your sincere prayers to God, to direct and bless you in the work you are desirous to undertake, he will most surely hear your prayers, and grant your petitions, which you may make in some such words as these following.

PRAYERS.

MORNING PRAYER *for a Negro in private.*

GLORY be to Thee, O God, who haſt brought me ſafe to the beginning of another day.

O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon me, keep, and defend me.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon me, ſave, and deliver me.

O God the Holy Ghoſt, have mercy upon me, help and comfort me.

O Merciful God, grant that I may perform my duty this day faithfully and chearfully; and that I may never murmur, be uneaſy, or impatient under any of the troubles of this life; but ever find reſt and comfort in Thy gracious promiſe, that if I live well, I ſhall, after death, be for ever happy with Thee in heaven, through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, my bleſſed Saviour. *Amen.*

Our

Our Father, which art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FAMILY PRAYERS *for Negroes to uſe in the Morning.*

Let all kneel down, and one ſay the following prayers.

GLORY be to Thee, O God, who haſt brought us ſafe to the beginning of another day.

O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, keep, and defend us.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, ſave, and deliver us.

O God the Holy Ghoſt, have mercy upon us, help and comfort us.

ALmighty and everlaſting God, who haſt ſafely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the ſame

with thy mighty power; and grant that we may, during the whole day, ſay no bad word, and that we may do no bad thing; but that in all our words and actions, we may glorify Thee, O God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Merciful God, grant that we may perform our duty this day faithfully and chearfully, and that we may never murmur, be uneaſy, or impatient, under any troubles of this life; but ever find reſt and comfort in Thy gracious promiſe, that if we live well, we ſhall, after death, be for ever happy with Thee in heaven, through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all deſires known, and from whom no ſecrets are hid; cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everliving God, who haſt made all the people that are upon the face of the earth, and haſt a love

to

o every ſoul whom thou haſt made; we eſeech Thee to have mercy upon all ews, Turks, Indians, and Negroes; take rom them all ignorance and hardneſs of eart, and make of them one Chriſtian amily, under one maſter, Jeſus Chriſt ur Lord. *Amen.*

Our Father, which art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

An EVENING PRAYER *for a Negro in private.*

MERCIFUL and gracious God, I give Thee humble thanks, for having preſerved me this day; and that none

of thy judgments, for my ſins have fallen upon me.

O Almighty God, from whom no darkneſs can hide me, and whoſe eye is continually upon me, deliver me from all temptations to ſin againſt Thee this night, and preſerve me from all the powers of evil ſpirits; and this I humbly beg, for the ſake of my ever bleſſed Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

O God, of infinite mercy, pardon my ſins of the day paſt, in thought, word, and deed; which I have committed through the fraud and malice of the devil, or through my own carnal will or frailneſs; and grant that they may never riſe up in judgment againſt me. And by thy grace, O God, bring me through all the trials and temptations of this world, to a bleſſed end: That I may die in peace, and reſt in hope, and riſe in glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Our Father, which art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead

ead us not into temptation; But deliver s from evil: For thine is the kingdom, nd the power, and the glory, for ever nd ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, nd the love of God, and the fellowſhip f the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all ever- more. *Amen.*

FAMILY PRAYER *for Negroes to uſe in the Evening.*

All devoutly kneeling, let one ſay,

O Lord, and heavenly Father, we acknowledge thy great goodneſs to us, n ſparing us when we deſerve puniſhnent, and ſetting before us the happineſs f a better life: Give us grace, that we nay lead and end our lives in thy faith nd fear, and to thy glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everliving God, we beſeech Thee to bleſs and proſper all hoſe whom thy providence hath ſet over s; and give us grace to obey and ſerve hem for conſcience-ſake, in all their lawful ommands: This we beg for Jeſus Chriſt is ſake. *Amen.*

O Almighty God, from whom no darkneſs can hide us, and whoſe eye is continually upon us, deliver us from all temptations to ſin and wickedneſs this night, and preſerve us from all the powers of the enemy of ſouls, for the ſake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

O God, the Creator and Preſerver of all mankind, we humbly beſeech Thee, to make thy holy Goſpel known to all Negroes, Jews, Turks, and Indians. Take from them all ignorance and hardneſs of heart, and make of them one Chriſtian family, under one Maſter, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

GRANT, O Lord, that in all our ſufferings here upon earth, we may ſtedfaſtly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that ſhall be revealed. And grant, O God, that we may ſo perfectly, and without all doubt, believe in thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, that our faith in thy ſight may never be reproved, for the ſake of the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord. *Amen.*

Almighty

ALmighty God, incline our hearts to every thing that is good, that we may be modeſt and humble, honeſt and juſt, temperate and diligent. And we humbly recommend to thy fatherly goodneſs our ſick relations and friends, and all other ſick and afflicted perſons, whether friends or enemies; may it pleaſe thy divine Majeſty, to comfort and relieve them, to give them patience under all their ſufferings, and a happy deliverance out of all their afflictions: And this we beg for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. *Amen.*

Our Father, which art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Some of the following PRAYERS *may be uſed on Sundays, and other leiſure Days.*

PRAYER *for Sunday Morning.*

O Lord, as I am on this thy day going to Church, let thy Holy Spirit go with me, and make me devout and ſerious. Raiſe my mind to think upon the four laſt things, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Make me to join fervently in the prayers of the Church, and to hearken to my duty with an honeſt heart, and ſerious attention. Give me grace to think and take care of my poor ſoul, that it may be ſaved through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, my ever bleſſed Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER *for Sunday Evening.*

MOST gracious God, let me never forget the many good things which I have heard this day, but let them abide in my heart, ſo as to make my life better: that when I die, I may be able to give a good account of them to Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and heavenly Maſter, when he ſhall come to judge the world at the laſt day. *Amen.*

MOST

MOST gracious God, who by thy wiſe Providence haſt appointed to mankind their ſeveral ſtations, I beſeech Thee to bleſs me with health of body and comfort of mind, that I may perform my daily taſk with cheerfulneſs and reſignation, doing my duty as unto Thee, and not merely as unto men; truſting to thy gracious promiſe, for a reward of my honeſty and faithfulneſs, which thou wilt give me, for the ſake of my bleſſed Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

O Lord, grant me patience under any affliction thou ſhalt ſee fit to lay upon me, and a mind always contented with my preſent condition. Give me grace to be honeſt, ſober and induſtrious, quiet and peaceable; to be compaſſionate to my poor afflicted relations, friends and neighbours, that ſo behaving well all my days, I may when I die, be happy for ever, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, give us grace that we may caſt away the works of darkneſs, and put upon us the whole armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, (in which thy Son Jeſus Chriſt came to viſit us in great humility), that in the laſt day,

day, when he ſhall come again in his glorious Majeſty to judge both the quick and dead, we may riſe to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, now and ever. *Amen.*

O God, whoſe bleſſed Son was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil, and make us the ſons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beſeech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourſelves even as he is pure; that when he ſhall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom, where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everlaſting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, haſt ſent thy Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him our fleſh, and to ſuffer death upon the croſs, that all mankind ſhould follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and alſo be made partakers of his reſurrection,

rection, through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, from whom all good things do come; Grant to us thy humble ſervants, that by thy holy inſpiration we may think thoſe things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

LET thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble ſervants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to aſk ſuch things as ſhall pleaſe thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everlaſting God, give unto us the increaſe of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which thou doſt promiſe, make us to love that which thou doſt command, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

LORD, we beſeech thee, grant thy people grace to withſtand the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil; and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O GOD

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GRANT, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O LORD, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

LIghten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

WE humbly beſeech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and for the glory of thy Name, turn from us all thoſe evils that we moſt righteouſly have deſerved: and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole truſt and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore ſerve thee in holineſs and pureneſs of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMNS.

For the MORNING.

AWAKE, my ſoul, and with the ſun
Thy daily ſtage of duty run:
Shake off dull ſloth, and early riſe
To pay thy morning ſacrifice.

Redeem thy miſ-ſpent time that's paſt;
Live this day, as if 'twere thy laſt:
T' improve thy talents take due care;
'Gainſt the great day thyſelf prepare.

Let

Let all thy converſe be ſincere;
Thy conſcience as the noon-day clear;
Think how th' all-ſeeing God thy ways
And all thy ſecret thoughts ſurveys.

Wake, and lift up thyſelf, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part;
Who all night long unwearied ſing,
Glory to the eternal King.

Glory to thee, who ſafe haſt kept;
And haſt refreſh'd me whilſt I ſlept:
Grant, Lord, when I from death ſhall wake,
I may of endleſs life partake.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew;
Scatter my ſins as morning dew:
Guard my firſt ſpring of thought and will,
And with Thyſelf my ſpirit fill.

Direct, control, ſuggeſt this day,
All I deſign, or do, or ſay;
That all my pow'rs, with all their might,
In thy ſole glory may unite.

Praiſe God, from whom all bleſſings flow;
Praiſe Him, all creatures here below;
Praiſe Him above, ye angelic hoſt:
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

For the EVENING.

GLory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the bleſſings of the light.
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Under thy own Almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The ills that I this day have done;
That with the world, myſelf, and Thee,
I, ere I ſleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that ſo I may
Triumphing riſe at the laſt day.

O may my ſoul on Thee repoſe;
And with ſweet ſleep mine eyelids cloſe:
Sleep that may me more vig'rous make,
To ſerve my God when I awake.

When in the night I ſleepleſs lie,
My ſoul with heavenly thoughts ſupply:
Let no ill dreams diſturb my reſt,
No pow'rs of darkneſs me moleſt.

Praiſe God, from whom all bleſſings flow;
Praiſe Him, all creatures here below:
Praiſe Him above, ye heavenly hoſt:
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

For

For the LORD'S DAY.

THIS is the day, the Lord's own day,
A day of holy reſt:
O teach our ſouls to reſt from ſin,
That reſt will pleaſe Thee beſt.

This is the day, thy day, O Lord,
On which thou didſt ariſe;
For ſinners having made thyſelf
A ſinleſs ſacrifice.

Thou, Thou alone, redeemed haſt
Our ſouls from deadly thrall;
With no leſs price than thine own blood,
The purchaſe of us all.

Had'ſt thou not dy'd we had not liv'd,
But dy'd eternally;
We'll live to Him that dy'd for us,
And praiſe his name on high.

Thou, Lord, didſt die, and riſe again,
And didſt aſcend on high,
That we poor ſinners, loſt and dead,
Might live eternally.

Thy blood was ſhed inſtead of ours;
Thy ſoul our guilt did bear;
Thou took'ſt our ſins, gav'ſt us thyſelf;
Thy love's beyond compare.

Welcome

Welcome and dear unto my ſoul
Is thy moſt holy day:
May I th' eternal ſabbath keep
With God my ſtrength and ſtay!

I come, I wait, I hear, I pray;
Thy footſteps, Lord, I trace:
I joy to think this is the way
To ſee my Saviour's face.

Theſe are my preparation-days;
And when my ſoul is dreſt,
Theſe Sabbaths ſhall deliver me
To mine eternal reſt.

PSALMS.

LET me with light and truth be bleſt,
Be theſe my guides to lead the way,
Till on thy holy hill I reſt,
And in thy ſacred temple pray.

Then will I there freſh altars raiſe
To God, who is my only joy;
And well-tun'd harps with ſongs of praiſe
Shall all my grateful hours employ.

Why then caſt down my ſoul, and why
So much oppreſs'd with anxious care?
On God, thy God, for aid rely,
Who will thy ruin'd ſtate repair.

HAVE

HAVE mercy, Lord, on me,
As thou wert ever kind;
Let me oppreſs'd with loads of guilt,
Thy wonted mercy find.

Waſh off my foul offence,
And cleanſe me from my ſin;
For I confeſs my crimes, and ſee
How great my guilt has been.

Againſt thee, Lord, alone,
And only in thy ſight
Have I tranſgreſs'd, and tho' condemn'd,
Muſt own thy judgments right.

In guilt each part was form'd
Of all this ſinful frame;
In guilt I was conceiv'd, and born
The heir of ſin and ſhame.

Yet thou, whoſe ſearching eye
Does inward truth require;
In ſecret did'ſt with wiſdom's laws
My tender ſoul inſpire.

With hyſſop purge me, Lord,
And ſo I clean ſhall be:
I ſhall with ſnow in whiteneſs vie,
When purify'd by thee.

Make me to hear with joy
Thy kind forgiving voice:
That ſo the bones which thou haſt broke
May with freſh ſtrength rejoice.

Blot

Blot out my crying ſins,
Nor me in anger view,
Create in me a heart that's clean,
An upright mind renew.

Withdraw not thou thy help,
Nor caſt me from thy ſight,
Nor let thy Holy Spirit take
Its everlaſting flight.

The joy thy favour gives
Let me again obtain:
And thy free Spirit's firm ſupport
My fainting ſoul ſuſtain.

TO bleſs thy choſen race,
In Mercy, Lord, incline,
And cauſe the brightneſs of thy face
On all thy Saints to ſhine:

That ſo thy wond'rous ways
May through the world be known;
Whilſt diſtant lands their tribute pay,
And thy ſalvation own.

Let diff'ring nations join
To celebrate thy fame:
Let all the world, O Lord, combine
To praiſe thy glorious name.

O let them ſhout and ſing,
With joy and pious mirth,
For thou the righteous Judge and King,
Shalt govern all the earth.

Let diff'ring nations join
To celebrate thy fame,
Let all the world, O Lord, combine
To praiſe thy glorious name.

Then ſhall the teeming ground
A large increaſe diſcloſe;
And we with plenty ſhall be crown'd,
Which God, our God, beſtows.

Then God upon our land
Shall conſtant bleſſings ſhow'r;
And all the world in awe ſhall ſtand
Of his reſiſtleſs pow'r.

WITH one conſent let all the earth
To God their cheerful voices raiſe,
Glad homage pay with awful mirth,
And ſing before him ſongs of praiſe;

Convinc'd that he is God alone,
From whom both we and all proceed;
We whom he chuſes for his own,
The flock that he vouchſafes to feed.

O enter then his temple gate,
Thence to his courts devoutly preſs,
And ſtill your grateful hymns repeat,
And ſtill his name with praiſes bleſs:

For he's the Lord ſupremely good,
His mercy is for ever ſure;
His truth which always firmly ſtood,
To endleſs ages ſhall endure.

WITH chearful notes let all the earth
To heav'n their voices raiſe,
Let all inſpir'd with godly mirth,
Sing ſolemn hymns of praiſe.

God's tender mercy knows no bound,
His truth ſhall ne'er decay:
Then let the willing nations round,
Their grateful tribute pay.

THE Lord himſelf, the mighty Lord,
Vouchſafes to be my guide:
The Shepherd by whoſe conſtant care
My wants are all ſupplied.

In tender graſs he makes me feed,
And gently there repoſe;
Then leads me to cool ſhades, and where
Refreſhing water flows.

He does my wand'ring ſoul reclaim,
And to his endleſs praiſe,
Inſtructs with humble zeal to walk
In his moſt righteous ways.

I paſs the gloomy vale of death,
From fear and danger free;
For there his aiding rod and ſtaff
Defend and comfort me.

Since God doth thus his wond'rous love
Through all my life extend;
That life to him I will devote,
And in his temple ſpend.

DIVINE SONGS.

My good Friend, you are earneſtly deſired to get the following Divine Songs by heart, and to ſing them at home, and in the field, when at your work, and at other times. The Songs you now ſing do you no good; but theſe will make your daily taſk appear eaſy, and your life comfortable.

Praiſe to GOD *for our Redemption.*

BLEST be the wiſdom and the pow'r,
The juſtice and the grace,
That join'd in counſel to reſtore,
And ſave our ruin'd race.

Our father ate forbidden fruit,
And from his glory fell;
And we his children thus were brought
To death, and near to hell.

Bleſt be the Lord that ſent his Son
To take our fleſh and blood;
He for our lives gave up his own,
To make our peace with God.

He honour'd all his Father's laws,
Which we have diſobey'd;

He bore our ſins upon the croſs,
And our full ranſom paid.

Behold him riſing from the grave;
Behold him rais'd on high:
He pleads his merit, there to ſave
Tranſgreſſors doom'd to die.

There on a glorious throne he reigns,
And by his pow'r divine,
Redeems us from the ſlaviſh chains
Of Satan and of ſin.

Thence ſhall the Lord to judgment come,
And with a ſov'reign voice
Shall call, and break up every tomb,
While waking ſaints rejoice.

O may I then with joy appear
Before the Judge's face,
And with the bleſt aſſembly there
Sing his redeeming grace.

The Excellency of the BIBLE.

GReat God, with wonder and with praiſe
On all thy works I look;
But ſtill thy wiſdom, pow'r, and grace,
Shine brighteſt in thy Book.

The ſtars that in their courſes roll,
Have much inſtruction giv'n;
But thy good word informs my ſoul
How I may climb to heav'n.

The fields provide me food, and ſhow
The goodneſs of the Lord;
But fruits of life and glory grow
In thy moſt holy word.

Here are my choiceſt treaſures hid,
Here my beſt comfort lies;
Here my deſires are ſatisfy'd,
And hence my hopes ariſe.

Lord, make me underſtand thy law;
Shew what my faults have been;
And from thy goſpel let me draw
Pardon for all my ſin.

Here would I learn how Chriſt has dy'd
To ſave my ſoul from hell:
Not all the books on earth beſide
Such heav'nly wonders tell.

Then let me love my Bible more,
And take a freſh delight
By day to read theſe wonders o'er,
And meditate by night.

Praiſe to GOD *for learning to Read.*

THE praiſes of my tongue
I offer to the Lord,
That I was taught, and learnt ſo young
To read his holy word.

That I am brought to know
The danger I was in,

By

y nature and by practice too,
A wretched Slave to Sin.

hat I am led to ſee
I can do nothing well;
nd whither ſhall a ſinner flee
To ſave himſelf from hell?

ear Lord, this book of thine
Informs me where to go,
or grace to pardon all my ſin,
And make me holy too.

ere I can read, and learn,
How Chriſt, the Son of God,
as undertook our great concern;
Our ranſom coſt his blood.

nd now he reigns above,
He ſends his Spirit down
o ſhew the wonders of his love,
And make his goſpel known.

may that Spirit teach,
And make my heart receive
hoſe truths which all thy ſervants preach,
And all thy ſaints believe.

hen ſhall I praiſe the Lord
In a more chearful ſtrain,
hat I was taught to read his word,
And have not learnt in vain.

The All-ſeeing GOD.

ALmighty God, thy piercing eye
Strikes thro' the ſhades of night,
And our moſt ſecret actions lie
All open to thy ſight.

There's not a ſin that we commit,
Nor wicked word we ſay,
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
Againſt the judgment-day.

And muſt the crimes that I have done
Be read and publiſh'd there?
Be all expos'd before the ſun,
While men and angels hear?

Lord, at thy foot aſham'd I lie;
Upward I dare not look;
Pardon my ſins before I die,
And blot them from thy book.

Remember all the dying pains
That my Redeemer felt,
And let his blood waſh out my ſtains,
And anſwer for my guilt.

O may I now for ever fear
T' indulge a ſinful thought,
Since the great God can ſee and hear,
And writes down ev'ry fault.

Heaven

Heaven and Hell.

THERE is beyond the ſky
A heav'n of joy and love;
And holy perſons when they die
Go to that world above.

There is a dreadful hell,
And everlaſting pains;
There ſinners muſt with devils dwell
In darkneſs, fire and chains.

Can ſuch a wretch as I
Eſcape this curſed end?
And may I hope whene'er I die
I ſhall to heav'n aſcend?

Then will I read and pray,
While I have life and breath;
Leſt I ſhould be cut off to-day,
Doom'd to eternal death.

Againſt Lying.

O 'Tis a lovely thing for youth
To walk betimes in wiſdom's way;
To fear a lie, to ſpeak the truth,
That we may truſt to all they ſay.

But liars we can never truſt,
Tho' they ſhould ſpeak the thing that's true;
And he that does one fault at firſt,
And lies to hide it, makes it two.

The

The Lord delights in them that ſpeak
The words of truth; but ev'ry liar
Muſt have his portion in the lake
That burns with brimſtone and with fire.

Then let me always watch my lips,
Leſt I be ſtruck to death and hell,
Since God a book of reck'ning keeps
For ev'ry lie that people tell.

Againſt Swearing, and Curſing, and taking GOD's *Name in vain.*

ANGELS, that high in glory dwell,
Adore thy name, Almighty God!
And devils tremble down in hell,
Beneath the terrors of thy rod.

And yet how wicked people dare
Abuſe thy dreadful glorious name!
And when they're angry how they ſwear,
And curſe their fellows, and blaſpheme!

How will they ſtand before thy face,
Who treated thee with ſuch diſdain,
While thou ſhalt doom them to the place
Of everlaſting fire and pain?

Then never ſhall one cooling drop
To quench their burning tongues be giv'n;
But I will praiſe thee here, and hope
Thus to employ my tongue in heav'n.

My heart ſhall be in pain to hear
Wretches affront the Lord above;
'Tis that great God whoſe pow'r I fear;
That heav'nly Father whom I love.

If my companions grow profane,
I'll leave their friendſhip, when I hear
Such ſinners take thy name in vain,
And learn to curſe and learn to ſwear.

The THIEF.

WHY ſhould I deprive my neighbour
Of his goods againſt his will?
Hands were made for honeſt labour,
Not to plunder or to ſteal.

'Tis a fooliſh ſelf-deceiving
By ſuch tricks to hope for gain:
All that's ever got by thieving
Turns to ſorrow, ſhame, and pain.

Have not Eve and Adam taught us
Their ſad profit to compute?
To what diſmal ſtate they brought us
When they ſtole forbidden fruit?

Oft we ſee a young beginner
Practiſe little pilf'ring ways,
Till grown up a harden'd ſinner;
Then the gallows ends his days.

Theft will not be always hidden,
Tho' we fancy none can ſpy:

When

When we take a thing forbidden,
God beholds it with his eye.

Guard my heart, O God of heav'n,
Leſt I covet what's not mine:
Leſt I ſteal what is not giv'n,
Guard my heart and hands from ſin.

Song for a Nurſe.

HUSH! my dear, lie ſtill and ſlumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heav'nly bleſſings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
Houſe and home thy friends provide;
All without thy care or payment,
All thy wants are well ſupply'd.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be;
When from heav'n he deſcended,
And became a child like thee?

Soft and eaſy is thy cradle:
Coarſe and hard thy Saviour lay;
When his birth-place was a ſtable,
And his ſofteſt bed was hay.

Bleſſed babe! what glorious features,
Spotleſs fair, divinely bright!
Muſt he dwell with brutal creatures!
How could angels bear the ſight?

Was

Was there nothing but a manger
Curſed ſinners could afford,
To receive the heavenly ſtranger!
Did they thus affront their Lord?

Soft my child! I did not chide thee,
Tho' my ſong might ſound too hard:
'Tis thy { * mother / nurſe that } ſits beſide thee,
And her arms ſhall be thy guard.

Yet to read the ſhameful ſtory,
How the Jews abus'd their King,
How they ſerv'd the Lord of glory,
Makes me angry while I ſing.

See the kinder ſhepherds round him,
Telling wonders from the ſky!
Where they ſought him, there they found him,
With his Virgin Mother by.

See the lovely babe a-dreſſing;
Lovely infant, how he ſmil'd!
When he wept, the mother's bleſſing
Sooth'd and huſh'd the holy child.

Lo, he ſlumbers in his manger,
Where the horned oxen fed;
Peace, my darling, here's no danger,
Here's no ox a-near thy bed.

* Here you may uſe the words, *brother, ſiſter, neighbour, friend,* &c.

'Twas

'Twas to ſave thee, child, from dying,
Save my dear from burning flame,
Bitter groans, and endleſs crying,
That thy bleſt Redeemer came.

May'ſt thou live to know and fear Him,
Truſt and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See his face, and ſing his praiſe!

I could give thee thouſand kiſſes,
Hoping what I moſt deſire:
Not a mother's fondeſt wiſhes
Can to greater joys aſpire.

GRACE BEFORE OUR MEALS.

O God, who giveſt proper food to all thy people, bleſs theſe good things to our uſe, and ourſelves to Thy ſervice, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

GRACE AFTER MEALS.

Make us truly thankful, O Lord, for our daily food, and for all Thy other mercies which we receive: And help us to love and ſerve Thee, the Giver of every thing that is good, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. *Amen.*

THE END.

3.

THE CONDITIONS OF OBTAINING SALVATION BY JESUS CHRIST.

riefly propoſed by Way of Queſtion and Anſwer;

Which may ſerve as an

xerciſe for the CHARITY SCHOOLS.

To which are added ſome PRAYERS.

THE TENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

inted for F. and C. RIVINGTON, Bookſellers to *The Society for Promoting Chriſtian Knowledge*, No. 62, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1798.

[Price 2d. or 12s. a Hundred.]

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OF OBTAINING

SALVATION

BY

JESUS CHRIST.

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THE

CONDITIONS

OF OBTAINING

SALVATION

BY

JESUS CHRIST, &c.

SECTION I.

QUESTION.

WHO made you?

Answer. GOD.

Q. Why did God make you?

A. That I might serve and glorify him, and be for ever happy in the Enjoyment of Him.

Q. How did God make you?

A 2 A. He

A. He first made *Adam* and E from whom all Generations of M and Women have ſince ſucceſſively d ſcended.

Q. What did God make you?

A. He made me a reaſonable Creatur

Q. What do you mean by ſaying yo are a Creature?

A. I mean that I had once no Bein and that the Being I have I received fro another, to wit, from God.

Q. What does this teach you?

A. It teaches me that I ought to li to the Honour of that God who gave m my Being.

Q. What does this farther teach you

A. To live in a conſtant Dependen upon God, who made me, and preſer me; and duly to own and acknowled my Dependence upon him, and to pra him.

Q. What do you mean by ſaying yo are a reaſonable Creature?

A. I mean that I am better than Beaſt, and endued with Reaſon and Un derſtanding, having and immortal Sou which is more noble and excellent th the Body.

Q. What does this teach you?

A.

A. It teaches me, that I ought never do any Thing below, or unworthy of yſelf; but ſo to demean myſelf, as that may hereafter give a comfortable Acunt to God.

SECT. II.

ueſt. IN what Condition did God make our firſt Parents?

Anſw. He made them righteous and ly, after his own Image, giving them ominion over the other Creatures here low.

Q. Did our firſt Parents continue in e happy State wherein God made them?

A. No; they broke the Law, which od had given them to make Trial of eir Obedience, and thereby brought iſery upon themſelves and all their oſterity.

Q. How does this Sin of our Firſt arents affect their Poſterity?

A. They are ſubject to Death, which y Sin entered into the World.

Q. How elſe does it affect them?

A. *Adam* and *Eve* having corrupted emſelves by ſinning againſt God, hoſe who deſcended from them muſt,

in the natural Courſe of Things, be
generate and corrupt too.

Q. Why ſo?

A. Becauſe they could communic
to their Poſterity no other but the ſa
corrupt Nature and evil Diſpoſitio
which by ſinning againſt God they h
brought upon themſelves.

Q. By what Names is the Corrupt
derived from our firſt Parents called
the New Teſtament?

A. It is called the *Fleſh* (*a*); and ſ
to luſt againſt the Spirit: and therefo
we muſt ſubdue and mortify it.

Q. How elſe is it called?

A. The *Old Man* (*b*); which, if
would be ſaved, we muſt kill and cr
cify.

Q. What other Name is given to t
Corruption, or carnal Concupiſcenc
we contracted from *Adam*, and which e
cites in us wicked Deſires, contrary
the Spirit of God?

A. It is called the *Body of Sin* (*c*)
which muſt be deſtroyed and ſlain, or
periſh everlaſtingly.

Q. Di

(*a*) Gal. v. 17. (*b*) Rom. vi. 6. (*c*) Rom. vi. 6.

Q. Did God leave Man after the Fall
his miſerable Condition?

A. No; of his infinite Grace and mere
oodneſs, He immediately promiſed a
viour, whom, in due Time, He ſent
o the World.

Q. Who is this Saviour?

A. *JESUS CHRIST*, the eter-
l and only begotten and beloved Son
God, who was born of a Virgin, "be-
g in all Things made like unto us, yet
thout Sin."

Q. What did Jeſus Chriſt do for our
lvation?

A. He became our *Prophet*, our *Prieſt*,
d our *King*.

Q. What did he do for us as our *Pro-*
et?

A. He taught us the Will of God,
d the Way to recover the Happineſs
hich by ſinning againſt Him we had loſt.

Q. When may we be ſaid to receive
im as our *Prophet?*

A. When we diligently attend to, and
llow his divine Inſtructions.

Q. What did Jeſus Chriſt for us as
ur *Prieſt?*

A. He ſuffered Death upon the Croſs,
o make Satisfaction for our Sins.

Q. What does Jesus Christ as our King

A. He rules and protects his faithful Servants, who sincerely obey his Laws, and his Enemies are forced to be subject to his Dominion.

SECT. III.

Quest. WHAT is required of us in order to our being saved by Jesus Christ?

A. Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience, or Newness and Holiness of Life.

Q. What is Faith?

A. Faith is an Assent of the Mind to all those divine Truths which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, particularly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Q. How may we know when our Faith is true and sincere?

A. Our Faith is true and sincere, when it prevails with us seriously to endeavour to obey all God's Commands, to fear above all Things his Threatnings, and to depend on Him for the Performance of his Promises.

Q. What is true Repentance?

A. True Repentance is such a godly Sorrow for Sin, as engages us to confess,

s, hate, and forſake it; and to undo much as in us lies, the Evil we have one.

Q. Does true Repentance include in it Change of the Life?

A. If our Repentance is true and al, it will be followed by a Change in e whole Life and Converſation; for e Heart and Mind being changed, a hange in the Life and Converſation ne-ſſarily follows.

Q. Do the Scriptures give any En-ouragement to truſt to a Death-bed Re-ntance?

A. Thoſe Chriſtians who knew, or ight have known the Will of God, but emained wilfully ignorant, have no En-ouragement in the Word of God to uſt to a Death-bed Repentance.

Q. Is wilful Ignorance a great Sin?

A. Wilful Ignorance is a great and amnable Sin; and therefore their Con-ition muſt be very bad who refuſe to arn the Will of God, becauſe they will ot do it.

Q. May we not hope, that God of his finite Mercy will accept of a Death-bed epentance?

A. God has given us no Aſſurance

hereof. As the Scriptutes repreſent Him to be Merciful, ſo they tell us, that he is Holy and Juſt.

Q. If Men have been ſo fooliſh and inconſiderate, as to put off their Repentance to their laſt Minutes, do the Miniſters of Chriſt uſe to bid them to deſpair of Mercy?

A. No: But they pray with them, and for them, exhorting them to do all that they can in their Circumſtances; but they cannot aſſure them, from God, that he will accept of ſuch a Repentance.

Q. Do you think a Death-bed Repentance impoſſible?

A. I will not ſay ſo; but it is extremely dangerous, and very uncomfortable.

Q. Why do you think ſo?

A. It is doubtful whether it is true and ſincere. We have had many ſad Examples of People, who have thought themſelves at the Point of Death, and have made great Profeſſions of Repentance, but, on their Recovery, they have returned to their former wicked Courſe of Life.

Q. What is a ſincere Obedience, or Newneſs and Holineſs of Life?

A. It conſiſts in denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and living ſoberly,

berly, righteouſly, and godly in this reſent World.

Q. Do not thoſe who truly repent, beve, and obey, become quite other Men han they were before?

A. Yes; for, being regenerate and orn again, by the Operation of the oly Spirit of God, they put off their rmer Converſation, and become new reatures.

Q. How elſe does this Change appear?

A. The Image of God is in ſome ood Degree reſtored to their Souls, and ney are daily endeavouring, by the unierſal Practice of Holineſs, to make hemſelves meet for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. Are we able, by our own natural trength, to do theſe Things?

A. No; the Aid and Aſſiſtance of the oly Spirit of God, who is given in Bapiſm, is neceſſary.

Q. How may we obtain ſuch Meaſures f divine Aſſiſtance as we ſtand in need of?

A. By being diligent and frequent in he Uſe of thoſe Means which God has ppointed to convey his Grace to us, nd a right Uſe of that Aſſiſtance He aleady has, or ſhall hereafter give us.

Q. What do you underſtand by Means of Grace?

A. Frequent and fervent Prayer to Almighty God, the receiving of the holy Sacrament often, hearing the Word of God, diligent reading or hearing the holy Scriptures, and meditating on them.

Q. Is Faſting neceſſary?

A. It may be ſometimes neceſſary to join Faſting with other holy Exercises, to ſubdue Sin in us, and to wean us from the Love of the World, and to draw us to God.

Q. What Encouragement have we to pray for the Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit of God?

A. The Promiſe of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luke* xi 13, who has aſſured us of God's Readineſs to give it to thoſe who with Humility, Earneſtneſs and Importunity, aſk it.

Q. What Time of our Lives ought we to ſet about the Performance of theſe Conditions?

A. As ſoon as ever we are of an Age capable of underſtanding them. Our Lives are very uncertain; if therefore we neglect the preſent Time, another may not be afforded us.

Q. Will

Q. Will none be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, ut thoſe who perform theſe Conditions?

A. Not any; becauſe Jeſus Chriſt and is Apoſtles moſt expreſsly and plainly y ſo.

Q. In what Place of Scripture is Faith, a Belief in Jeſus Chriſt, made neceſ- ry to Salvation?

A. In the third Chapter of St. *John*, nd the 36th Verſe. *He that believeth on he Son hath everlaſting Life: and he that elieveth not the Son, ſhall not ſee Life; but he Wrath of God abideth on him.*

Q. What Scriptures aſſert the Neceſ- ty of Repentance?

A. Our Saviour himſelf, *Luke* xiii. 5, ffirms, that, *Except we repent, we ſhall ll periſh.*

Q. What ſays St. *Peter*, *Acts* iii. 19. oncerning Repentance and Converſion?

A. He makes them the Condition of ur having our Sins blotted out, or for- iven.

Q. How does it appear, that Newneſs and Holineſs of Life, or Obedience, s neceſſary?

A. From the twelfth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Verſe 14. *Follow Peace with all Men, and Holineſs, without*

without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord. And Chap. v. 9. *He* [Chriſt] *became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him.*

SECT. IV.

Queſt. HOW is this Obedience otherwiſe expreſſed in Scripture?

A. By propoſing to our Imitation the Examples of thoſe, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes; but chiefly the Example of Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. In what muſt we imitate Jeſus Chriſt?

A. We muſt imitate the Holineſs of His Life, by being chaſte, pure, and holy in all our Converſation, as He was.

Q. In what elſe?

A. We muſt deny ourſelves, and take up our Croſs and follow Him.

Q. Can you give me another Inſtance?

A. Yes; we muſt avoid all Kind of Pride, and endeavour to be meek and lowly as Jeſus Chriſt was.

Q. May we Slander, Reproach, Mock, or Deſpiſe any one?

A. No:

A. No: And if any treat us ſo, we muſt bear it patiently, returning Good for Evil; for ſo did Jeſus Chriſt, when He lived here on Earth.

Q. Did Jeſus Chriſt entirely ſubmit himſelf to the Will of His heavenly Father?

A. He did; ſaying in his bitter Agony, *Luke* xxii. 42. *Father—not my Will, but thine be done.*

Q. How muſt we imitate Him herein?

A. By being in all Things reſigned to the Will of God, even under the greateſt Trials and ſharpeſt Afflictions and Sufferings.

Q. May we not intend our own Praiſe, or do our own Will?

A. We muſt not; but in all Things do the Will of God, propoſing his Glory as the End of all our Actions. For as long as we follow our own Wills, and ſet them up in Oppoſition to God's Will, it is impoſſible to be happy.

Q. How muſt we behave ourſelves towards our Chriſtian Brethren?

A. We muſt love them without Diſſimulation, and be charitably affected towards all Men; forgiving and praying for our Enemies.

Q. How

Q. How muſt we carry ourſelves towards the Poor and Afflicted?

A. We muſt comfort the Afflicted, relieve the Poor and Needy, according to our Ability, and, as we have Opportunity, do Good to all Men; Jeſus Chriſt having given us an Example in theſe Things.

SECT. V.

Queſt. CAN you now tell me in few Words, what thoſe muſt do, who would have a reaſonable Hope of being ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt?

A. They muſt firmly believe and obey the Doctrine of Chriſt, and repent and turn from all Sin to God.

Q. What Motives are there to quicken us to a ſpeedy Performance of theſe Conditions?

A. The frequent and ſerious Conſideration of the four laſt Things; *Death*, *Judgment*, *Heaven* and *Hell*.

Q. What does the Scripture teach us concerning Death?

A. That it is appointed for all Men once to die.

Q. What

Q. What Comparison does the Spirit God make Use of, to represent the ortness and Uncertainty of our Lives?

A. They are compared to Grass, which on withers after it is cut; and to a Va-ur, which appeareth for a little Time, d then vanisheth away.

Q. What ought the Consideration of e Shortness and Uncertainty of our ves to teach us?

A. The Shortness and Uncertainty of r Lives ought to teach us so to num-r our Days, that we may apply our earts to true Wisdom; which consists fearing God, and keeping his Com-andments, and departing from Evil.

Q. What else may we learn from nce?

A. Never to defer any Thing that is cessary and of Consequence to us; be-use there is no Work, nor Device, nor sdom, nor Knowledge in the Grave, ither we are going.

Q. Does not the Scripture tell us, that od will call all Men to Judgment, at the nd of the World?

A. The Scripture tells us, that God s appointed a Day, wherein he will dge the World in Righteousness by Jesus

Jeſus Chriſt, whom He has appointed Judge of the Quick and Dead.

Q. What does it ſay concerning us?

A. That we muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Q. Do you believe that you yourſelf ſhall be raiſed from the Dead, and be ſet before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt?

A. I firmly believe it; and not only that, but that every one, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Young and Old, muſt there appear.

Q. What Effect ought this Conſideration to have upon us?

A. It ſhould make us ſearch and try our Ways, and turn unto the Lord, that we may not at this Judgment be condemned with the World of the Ungodly.

Q. Ought we not to pray to God to aſſiſt us in our Examination and Preparation for Death and Judgment?

A. Yes; becauſe the Heart is deceitful above all Things. And therefore we ſhould pray with *David**, "Search me,

* Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

e, O God, and know my Heart; try e, and know my Thoughts, and ſee if ere be any wicked Way in me, and lead e into the Way everlaſting."

SECT. VI.

Queſt. WHAT does the Scripture teach us concerning Hea-en?

A. We are told, that it is a Place of eſt, and Comfort, and Joy; even that ere is Fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſures for-vermore.

Q. What more do the Scriptures ſay f our Happineſs there?

A. That when Chriſt ſhall appear, e ſhall be like Him, and ſhall ſee Him s He is; and that our vile Body ſhall e changed, and made like unto His lorious Body.

Q. How are the Inhabitants of this lace deſcribed?

A. As Kings, having Crowns and cepters; and the Glory of which they re Partakers, is ſtyled an exceeding and ternal Weight of Glory.

Q. Will all People hereafter be ad-nitted to this inconceivable Happineſs?

A. Many

A. Many will ſeek to be admitted into this happy Place, who will be excluded, becauſe they did not ſtrive, that is, they did not take Pains enough, nor ſet about it till it was too late.

Q. Who are thoſe that will enter?

A. They are thoſe who repent and are converted, and become new Creatures, and live and walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory.

Q. What is neceſſary for us to do, if we would not deceive ourſelves with vain and deceitful Hopes of going to Heaven?

A. It is neceſſary for us ſincerely and heartily to endeavour to become like unto God, and to purify ourſelves as he is pure.

Q. Who are thoſe that will be excluded this happy Place?

A. All the Workers of Iniquity, all unrighteous and wicked People.

Q. What particular Perſons are mentioned who will be ſhut out of Heaven?

A. Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, Thieves, Covetous, Revilers, Extortioners, Drunkards, ſuch as live in Malice and Envy, and ſuch like Sins, ſhall

hall be excluded the Kingdom * of Heaven.

Q. What Effect ought this to have pon you?

A. It ought to engage us to forſake ll Sin, and to be always abounding in he Work of the Lord; never to be eary or diſcouraged in Well-doing, but o perſevere in our Duty to God, know-ng that we ſhall be ſo amply rewarded by Him.

Q. What does the Scripture ſay of Hell?

A. That it is a Place of Torment, hich was prepared for the Devil and his Angels; that the Puniſhment there is verlaſting; and that there is Weeping, nd Wailing, and Gnaſhing of Teeth.

Q. Who will be condemned to this readful Place?

A. All wicked Livers, all who know ot God, and obey not the Goſpel of ur Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. How ſhall theſe be puniſhed?

A. With everlaſting Deſtruction from he Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His Power, and ſhall be caſt into

* Compare 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. and Gal. v. 20, 21.

into Hell-Fire, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.

Q. What muſt you do to eſcape this Place of Torment?

A. In order to eſcape the Wrath that is to come, and be ſaved from eternal Miſery, I muſt believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and truly repent of all my Sins, and turn to God, bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance; I muſt daily endeavour to pleaſe God, making His Laws the Rule of my Life.

Prayers to be uſed alone, or with others, which is the Reaſon why the Words, we, us, our, which ſtand for more Perſons than one, are put; not I, me, my, *which denote only one Perſon. And if we at any Time uſe them alone, we muſt intend all other People for whom we ought to pray.*

A Morning PRAYER.

I.

WE thank Thee, O moſt merciful Father, for thy Protection this Night paſt, and for all other Mercies, Spiritual

piritual and Temporal. We recom-
end to thy Care and Providence our
uls and Bodies, and beg thy Bleſſing
whatever Buſineſs thou haſt appointed
to do. And grant we may make thy
lory, and the Salvation of our Souls,
greateſt Buſineſs and Care of our
ves, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.
nen.

II.

O God, grant we may always re-
mber that ſolemn Promiſe and Vow
ade in our Name at our Baptiſm, and
ve us the conſtant Aſſiſtance of thy
race to perform the ſame, by renounc-
the Devil and all his Works, the
mps, Vanities, and evil Cuſtoms of
World, and all the ſinful Luſts of
Fleſh, ſo as not to follow or be led
them; and by heartily believing,
openly profeſſing all the Articles of
Chriſtian Faith; and by keeping thy
y Will and Commandments, and
lking in the ſame all the Days of our
fe. O God, make us truly ſenſible
t we are no farther Chriſtians, than
we perform this our bounden Duty
Service; and that on the Obſerv-
e thereof, depends all the Benefits

Christ has purchaſed for us, and all o
Comfort and Happineſs, as well in th
Life as in that which is to come.

III.

Give us Grace, O Lord, to belie
in Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Th
with all our Heart, and Soul, a
Strength; to worſhip Thee, to gi
Thanks to Thee, to put our whole Tru
in Thee, and to call upon Thee. Enabl
us to honour thy holy Name and Wor
and whatever hath any Relation to The
and to ſerve Thee truly, not only
Times ſet apart for thy more ſolem
Worſhip, but all the Days of our Li
through Jeſus Chriſt; in whoſe Name a
Words we continue to pray:

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

[*Here may be uſed the Addition for Sun*
day *Morning*, Page 29, *when that D*
returns; *and if any one be ſick in the F*
mily, *the Prayer*, Page 30.]

IV.

May the Bleſſing of God the Fath
of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of
holy Spirit, be with us, keep, pro

d proſper us in all our lawful Under-
kings this Day, and evermore. *Amen.*

A PRAYER *for Noon.*

O LORD, and heavenly Father, who art the Giver of all Goodneſs, we eſeech Thee to ſend thy Grace unto and all People, that we may worſhip hee, ſerve thee, and obey Thee, as e ought to do, according to the Exmple of Jeſus Chriſt, and as thy Saints d Angels do in Heaven. Send us, O ord, of thy infinite Bounty and Goodeſs, all Things that be needful both for r Souls and Bodies, whether they rete to this Life or a better. Be merciful nto us, and forgive us our Sins, and ſpoſe us by thy Grace heartily to forve all that have offended us, in Obeence to thy Command.

Be pleaſed, O God, to ſave and dend us in all Dangers, Ghoſtly and Boily; to keep us from all Sin and Wickneſs, the greateſt of all Evils, and om that evil One, our ſpiritual Eney the Devil, and from everlaſting eath, which is the Wages of Sin. All is thou canſt do by thy Power; and

we truſt of thy infinite Mercy wilt do, through the Merits of Jeſus-Chriſt. *Amen.*

An Evening PRAYER.

I.

O GOD the Father, have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, our only Mediator and Advocate; and for his Sake forgive us all the Sins we have this Day, or at any other Time committed, in Thought, Word, or Deed, either againſt Thee, our Neighbour, or Ourſelves. We are grieved and ſorry, and do heartily repent that we have offended Thee; and we humbly come to Thee for Mercy and Forgiveneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

II.

O Lord, we beſeech Thee to incline our Hearts to love our Neighbour as Ourſelves, and to do unto all Men, as we would they ſhould do unto us in the like Condition and Circumſtances. Particularly give us Grace to Love, Honour, and upon Occaſion, as far as we are able, to ſuccour our natural Parents, Father and Mother.

To

To honour and obey the King, and ll that are put in Authority under Him. Endue us with a meek and humble Spi- it, that we may willingly and cheer- ully ſubmit ourſelves to all our Govern- rs, Teachers, ſpiritual Paſtors, and Maſ- ers, and to order ourſelves lowly and re- erently to all our Betters.

III.

O Lord, grant that we may never hurt ny Body by Word or Deed.

That we may never bear Malice nor Hatred in our Hearts.

That we may always keep our Tongues from Evil-ſpeaking, Lying, nd Slandering.

That we may be true and juſt in all ur Dealings, and keep our Hands from Picking and Stealing.

May we never covet or deſire other Men's Goods, but learn and labour truly nd honeſtly to get our own Living.

IV.

We beg thy Grace, O Lord, to ena- ble us to keep our Bodies in Temper- nce, Soberneſs, and Chaſtity; and that e may faithfully do our Duty in that tate of Life unto which Thou wilt call

us. All which we humbly beg for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

[*Here may be uſed the Addition for* Sunday *Evening*, Page 29. *Alſo the Prayer when any one is ſick in the Family*, Page 30.]

V.

We commit our Souls and Bodies, this Night and ever, to thy Keeping, and moſt wiſe Diſpoſal. Make thou our lying down and riſing up ſafe and comfortable.

VI.

Bleſs all mankind, more eſpecially all Chriſtians. Particularly we pray for that Part of thy Church in theſe Kingdoms; and herein for our Sovereign King GEORGE, our gracious Queen CHARLOTTE, his Royal Highneſs *George* Prince of *Wales*, and all the Royal Family; and for all in Authority in Church or State. Bleſs our Parents, Friends, Relations, and Benefactors, comfort all in Affliction and Adverſity, every where. Beſtow upon us whatſoever Thou ſeeſt beſt for our Souls and Bodies, for the Sake

Sake of Jeſus Chriſt; in whoſe Words we continue to pray;

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer to be added to the Morning Prayer on Sunday.

WE praiſe and worſhip Thee, O Lord, the Creator of the World; we give Thee Thanks for our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; we bleſs Thee for his Reſurrection, which we on this Day commemorate.

Diſpoſe our Minds to a ſerious Attendance upon Thee in all holy Duties. Suffer us not ſo far to forget the Intereſt of our Souls, as to neglect the religious Obſervation of this holy Day. Make us attentive to thy holy Word, and diligent in the Uſe of the Means of Grace. Let thy holy Spirit aſſiſt him, whom thou haſt appointed to miniſter to us in holy Things, that he may ſhew forth thy Glory, and ſet forward our Salvation. And when we are returned from thy public Worſhip, may we employ ourſelves in Prayer, in Reading and Meditating on thy holy Word, or otherwiſe religiouſly and uſefully, to the Amendment of our Lives, and be-

coming ſuch as thou canſt love and de-
light in. Grant this for the Sake of Je-
ſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be added to the Evening Prayer on Sunday.

O Lord, pardon the Wandering and Diſorder of our Minds, and what-ever elſe thou haſt ſeen amiſs in the Performance of our religious Duties this Day. Aſſiſt us to remember and prac-tiſe thoſe divine Truths, which we have heard and learnt; that ſo we may be-come more holy in our Converſation, more mindful of the Duties of our ſeve-ral Relations, and more contented in our Condition, to thy Glory, and the Good of thoſe with whom we have to do. We aſk this through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer when any one is ſick in the Fa-mily, which may be added to the Morn-ing or Evening Prayer, or any other Prayers.

O Lord, we humbly pray thee to be Merciful to [*him* or *her*] in this Family,

family, who is visited with Sickness: Grant that [*he* or *she*] may take [*his* or *her*] Sickness patiently, and recover [*his* or *her*] bodily Health, if it be thy gracious Will. Give thy Blessing to the Means used for restoring [*him* or *her.*] Preserve [*him* or *her*] from all violent Assaults of the Enemy. And make us all more and more sensible of our own Weakness and Frailty, and of the Folly and Danger of trusting to a late and Death-bed Repentance. Hear us for the sake of thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a Child or Young Person.

GLORY be to Thee, O Lord, who hast preserved me from the Perils of the Night past, who hast refreshed me with Sleep, and raised me up again to praise thy Holy Name.

I humbly worship Thee, O God, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ my Redeemer; and I do again devote myself to Thee, desiring to serve Thee faithfully this, and all the Days of my Life.

I was

I was made thy child, and the Dis-ciple of thy Son Jeſus by Baptiſm, and then received the Promiſe of thy holy Spirit. Let that good Spirit thoroughly cleanſe me from all the Corruption of my Nature.

Help me to remember Thee, my Creator, in the Days of my Youth.

Preſerve me from thoſe Errors and Follies, to which the Frailty of my Age does moſt expoſe me; and keep me in-nocent from every great Offence.

Deliver me from the Vanity of mine own Heart, and from the Temptations of evil Company.

Incline my Heart to all that is Good; that I may be Modeſt and Humble, True and Juſt, Temperate and Diligent, Reſpectful and Obedient to my Supe-riors; that I may fear and love Thee above all; that I may love my Neigh-bour as myſelf, and do to every one as I would they ſhould do unto me.

Let thy good Providence defend me this Day from all Evil; let the Grace of thy holy Spirit continually prevent and aſſiſt me.

Bleſs me, I pray Thee, in my Learn-ing, and help me daily to increaſe in

Knowledge

nowledge, and Wiſdom, and all Vir-
e. I humbly beg thy Bleſſing upon
l my Relations and Friends, (particu-
rly * my Father and Mother, my Bro-
ers and Siſters, and every one in this
ouſe) grant them whatſoever may be
od for them in this Life, and guide
em to Life everlaſting.

I humbly commit myſelf to thee, O
ord, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt my
viour, and in the Words which he him-
f hath taught me.

Our Father, &c.

* Here let every one mention his or her parti-
ar Relations.

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n Evening Prayer to be uſed daily by every Child at Home.

GLORY be to Thee, O Lord, who
haſt preſerved me the Day paſt,
o haſt defended me from all the Evils
which I am conſtantly expoſed in
is uncertain Life, who haſt continued
y Health, who haſt beſtowed upon me
Things neceſſary for Life and God-
eſs.

I humbly beſeech Thee, O heavenly
ther, to pardon whatſoever Thou
haſt

haſt ſeen amiſs in me this Day, in my Thoughts, Words, or Actions, [particularly *.]

Make me, O Lord, thoroughly ſenſible of the great Weakneſs and Corruption of my Nature, and the many Errors of my Life.

Aſſiſt me, I pray Thee, in making my conſtant Endeavour to reſiſt and conquer every evil Inclination within me and every Temptation from without.

Help me daily to increaſe in the Knowledge and Love of Thee, my God, and of my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Shew me the Way in which I ſhould walk, whilſt I am young, and grant that I may never depart from it.

Bleſs to me, I pray Thee, whatſoever good Inſtructions have been given me this Day, or at any other Time; help me carefully to remember them, and duly to improve them, that I may be ever growing in Knowledge, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs.

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* Here confeſs and bewail any particular Sin you may have committed in the Day paſt.

Conſider that Lying, taking God's Name in vain, Stealing, Quarrelling, Stubbornneſs, calling of Names, Swearing, &c. are great and heinous Sins.

I humbly commit my Soul and Body
thy Care this Night, begging thy gra-
us Protection and Bleſſing.
And all theſe Bleſſings which I aſk for
ſelf, I heartily deſire for all my Re-
ons and Friends, and all in this Houſe:
t it pleaſe Thee to guide us all in
s Life preſent, and to conduct us to
heavenly Kingdom, through Jeſus
riſt our only Lord and Saviour; in
oſe Words I conclude my Prayers.

Our Father, &c.

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hort Prayer for every Child, when they irſt come into their Seats at Church.

ORD, I am now in thy Houſe:
aſſiſt me, and all that are now met
ether to worſhip Thee: let thy ho-
Spirit help our Infirmities, and diſ-
our Hearts to Seriouſneſs, Atten-
and Devotion; to the Honour of
Holy Name, and the Benefit of our
ls, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.
en.

Before they leave their Seats; thus,

BLESSED be thy Name, O Lord, for this Opportunity of attending Thee in thy Houſe and Service. Make us, I pray Thee, Doers of thy Word, not Hearers only. Accept both us and our Services, through our only Mediator Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

Grace before Meat.

BLESS, O Lord, we beſeech Thee, theſe thy good Creatures to our Uſe, and ſanctify us to thy Service, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Grace after Meat.

BLESSED and praiſed be thy holy Name, O Lord, for theſe and all thy other Bleſſings beſtowed upon us through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.

4.

SERIOUS EXHORTATIONS,

o a Religious Obſervance f the LORD's-DAY.
To FREQUENT COMUNION, and a careful erformance of our REIGIOUS Vows.
To a decent and devout Behaviour in the CHURCH of GOD.
IV. To a Reverend Uſe of GOD's Holy Name in common Diſcourſe.
V. To the great Duty of FAMILY PRAYER.

IN SEVERAL

LETTERS

FROM A

MINISTER to his PARISHIONERS.

To which are added,

PRAYERS

For the USE of

FAMILIES.

The TENTH EDITION.

beſeech you, Brethren, ſuffer the Word of Exhortation. Heb. xiii. 22.

LONDON:

ted for F. and C. RIVINGTON, Bookſellers to he SOCIETY *for Promoting Chriſtian Knowledge*, o. 62, ST. PAUL's CHURCH-YARD. 1796.

[Price 4*d*. ſtitched, or 28*s*. a Hundred.]



THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THE Author of the following Exhortations *thinks there needs no Apology for the publiſhing of them; becauſe though there may be many excellent Diſcourſes upon the ſame Subject; yet, as in the Time of the Plague, or common Sickneſs, it concerns every honeſt Phyſician to caſt about, and provide his Antidotes and Preſervatives againſt the ſpreading of that Poiſon; ſo it muſt concern every ſincere* Chriſtian, *eſpecially in Times of common Licentiouſneſs, and almoſt outrageous Impiety and Profaneneſs, to endeavour what in him lies after the Cure of ſuch epidemical Evils, which, if diſregarded, it is greatly*

to be feared, will bring Ruin and De-
ſtruction upon the whole Society, as well
as Miſery and Torment upon every parti-
cular Offender. But if theſe Papers can
but in the leaſt contribute to make Men
live and act ſuitably to their moſt holy
Profeſſion, that is the only End he aims
at; and therefore will eaſily overlook the
Cenſures that poſſibly may be caſt upon
them, by the profane Wits and Diſputers
of the Age.

He has only this to requeſt of the Reader,
that he would not ſatisfy himſelf with
the bare curſory Reading of the following
Exhortations, *but would endeavour to*
imprint them effectually upon his Heart.
And if by this Means he ſhall receive any
Benefit, he entreats him to give GOD *the*
Glory, and to praiſe his holy Name, for
making the Author inſtrumental to his
Good.

I. A

A ſerious Exhortation to a Religious Obſervance of the Lord's Day.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

WE are expreſly required to ſet apart one Day in ſeven for the Religious Worſhip and Service of our God; nd this, if duly and conſcientiouſly obſerved y us, cannot but contribute very much to our piritual Felicity. The Day obſerved by the *ews* was the Seventh, in Remembrance that od, after he had completed his Work of reation in ſix Days, reſted on the ſeventh ay, and therefore bleſſed and ſanctified it: ut then, after the wonderful Incarnation of e Son of God for the Redemption of Man, ter He roſe again from the Dead, upon the rſt Day of the Week, and thereby triumphed ver Sin and the Grave, it was not without reat Reaſon, that the primitive Chriſtians ppropriated that Day, upon which the greatſt Bleſſing that Man can poſſibly enjoy was ompleted, to the ſolemn Commemoration f their Redeemer, and of all the manifold dvantages and Privileges that flowed from is Agony and bloody Sweat, from his Croſs nd Paſſion, from his precious Death and Burial, and from his glorious Reſurrection om the Dead. Upon this Day the Apoſtles nd Diſciples aſſembled * themſelves, which

* John xx. 19.

is altogether ſufficient to warrant the Practice of the Church in all ſucceeding Ages; and in Conformity to their religious Example, I moſt earneſtly intreat you, always to bear a religious Regard to this Day, however the Practice of too many amongſt us may ſeem to diſcountenance it. And, that you may the better diſcharge your Duty in this reſpect, ſhall take the Freedom to lay before you the Sum of your Duty in relation to your Obſervance of this Day. And firſt,

If you would keep the Lord's Day holy, you muſt do in it no manner of Work; you muſt lay aſide all your worldly Concerns, and give God the entire Poſſeſſion of your Hearts; you muſt avoid every Thing that would diſtract you in his Service, and would fix your Hearts upon the Affairs of this lower World; you are by no Means to fancy yourſelves indulged in Idleneſs, by this Command to reſt; becauſe as you are obliged by Precept to reſt from your worldly Labours, ſo you are at the ſame Time to take up your Spiritual Concerns. And indeed, unleſs you ſanctify this Reſt, you break God's Commandment, as well as if you refuſe to reſt from thoſe Employments you are permitted to carry on for the Space of ſix Days before. So that the *Jewiſh* and ſuperſtitious Obſervation of the Sabbath, you ought carefully to avoid; inaſmuch as they preferred the outward Reſt, the bare withdrawing from their ordinary Buſineſs, before either the Means or Works of Sancti-

ctification. It is indeed greatly to be fear- that it is too common amongſt us at this , to look upon the Lord's Day, which is icated to the Service of God, only as a ſpite from our Labours; to think, that if ſet theſe wholly aſide, we have done ſuffi- nt towards the Religious Obſervance of this y; nay, what is ſtill worſe, how many nd this ſacred Portion of Time in Riot Exceſs, in Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, luxurious Eaſe and Divertiſements? How ny in diſpatching thoſe Affairs, which they agine their Buſineſs at other Times will not e them Leiſure to tranſact? But is not this tting the World in the Place of God? Is this preferring our Temporal before our iritual Intereſt? Extreme Folly! that we ould ſpend that Time, we ought to employ the Service of our God, in purſuing that nity and Vexation, which is a certain At- ndant upon the Affairs of this lower World. xtreme Ingratitude! that being allowed by r indulgent Creator, the Space of ſix Days every Week for our Employment in world- Buſineſs, we ſhould yet think one Day too uch to lay out upon the Welfare of our uls, and the Glory of our God!

But further, though you are obliged to reſt om your worldly Concerns, yet you are by o Means forbidden Works of Neceſſity and harity: Of the firſt Sort is that neceſſary Work for making Proviſion for the Suſte- ance of the Body, as alſo the taking Care of hoſe Creatures that are uſeful to us by their

Labour; and therefore our bleſſed Saviour does not blame the Phariſees in this reſpect, when he aſks them, "what Man was among them that ſhould have one Sheep, and in caſe that fall into a Pit on the Sabbath-Day, would not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" But he makes uſe of this uſual Practice amongſt them, to ſhew them the Neceſſity of Works of Charity, of which Sort are all thoſe Works that tend to the Good of our Brethren, and ſuch Works as theſe we have recommended to us by the great Example of our Lord and Maſter, who made no Scruple to heal the Man that had the withered Hand on the Sabbath-Day. For no thing is more certain, than that to relieve the Neceſſities of our indigent Brethren, whether it be by pouring ſweet Oil into their Wounds, or by contributing to their Wants out of our Abundance, will render our Prayers more acceptable to our heavenly Father. It was this made the Prayers of * *Cornelius* enter into the Preſence of God, and ſtand there as a Memorial of his Love. But to go on.

If you would keep the Lord's Day holy you muſt employ yourſelves in holy Exercises of Piety and Devotion; you muſt take Care conſtantly to attend thoſe Prayers and Praiſes that are publicly offered up to God in his Houſe; and this out of a due Conſideration that no manner of Excuſe, leſs than an Impoſſibility, or Work of Neceſſity or Charity will be able to juſtify your Neglect in this Matter, at the great and terrible Day of Ac-

* Acts xix. 4.

count

count; when it will undoubtedly be demanded of you, how many of these blessed Opportunities of serving and adoring your Creator you have neglected and abused; when it will be judicially required, what Reasons you can alledge for your Absence, and for your sacrilegious robbing your God of the Honour due unto his Name. Then the wilful Violator of the Sabbath will exceedingly quake and tremble; then will his Joints, like *Belshazzar*'s, strike together; then will he curse, but alas! when it is too late, those fatal Allurements that seduced him from his Duty, and will rack himself with the keen Resentments of his Folly. As you tender therefore the Salvation of your immortal Souls, as you desire to partake of a blissful Eternity; and consequently, to avoid everlasting Misery and Woe; you must constantly attend the Public Service of the Church upon the Lord's Day: Otherwise what can you justly expect, but to fall under the Wrath of that great King *, who highly resented the Refusal of those, that he most graciously invited to the Dinner he had prepared?

The *Ethiopian* Eunuch, a Man of great Power and Authority under Queen *Candace*, thought himself concerned to take a long Journey to join in the Praises of God at the Temple of *Jerusalem*; his Greatness did by no Means impair or lessen his Religion, neither did the great Distance he was at from *Jerusalem* appear to him as a sufficient Excuse

* Matt. xxi. 5, 6, 7.

for his Abſence. The bleſſed Effects of this his religious Zeal, you may read in his Converſion: "By the ſpecial Appointment of God, *Philip* "drew near, and joined himſelf to his Chariot "as he returned; inſtructed him in the Doc- "trine of Chriſt, and baptized him." So amply rewarded was the Zeal of this great Man for the Honour and Glory of God. This Man undoubtedly came up to the Temple with an hearty Purpoſe to join in the ſolemn Praiſes of his Creator; and therefore we may very reaſonably conclude, would not there ſhew any Appearance, or the leaſt Sign of the Neglect of his Duty; if he had, he would ſcarce have recommended himſelf thereby ſo much to the Favour of God, as to have *Philip* ſent to meet him for his Converſion. But in the next Place, if you would keep holy the Sabbath Day, you muſt not only be conſtant in your Attendance upon God's public Worſhip in the Houſe that is called by his Name; but you muſt alſo be ever conſtant in your private Worſhip of Him, at your ſeveral Homes.

The Inability and Weakneſs that is in Man makes it highly neceſſary for him to apply himſelf to God, for the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace. Man is not able of himſelf to perform aught of his Duty aright; but being naturally led aſide by his perverſe Appetites and Paſſions, is more prone to Evil than to Good. Some one or other empty Curioſity or vain Amuſement is always biaſſing his Will, and corrupting his Judgment; inſomuch, that whilſt he remains in his natural and depraved

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State, the Law of God can find but little or no Place in his Heart; and this is agreeable to what the Apoſtle tells us, that "the natural "Man underſtands not the Things that be of "God;" and for this Reaſon it becomes abſolutely neceſſary, that he fix his Heart ſtedfaſtly upon God, and pray for his divine Aſſiſtance in the Performance of his Duty. Prayer, as one obſerves, is the Key which opens the Door of Mercy; the Mound that keeps out an Inundation of Judgments; nay, it is this that has looſed Iron Chains; it is this that has unlocked the Windows of Heaven, and has broken the Bars of Death; it is this, which if duly performed, will moſt aſſuredly obtain for us the Mercy and Protection of Heaven; it is this which, being performed in ſecret, will be rewarded openly. The Directions our bleſſed Lord himſelf gives in this Caſe, are therefore highly worthy your Obſervation; * "When "thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypo"crites are; for they love to pray ſtanding in "the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the "Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men. Ve"rily I ſay unto you, they have their Re"ward: But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter "into thy Cloſet; and when thou haſt ſhut "thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in "ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſe"cret, ſhall reward thee openly." This Duty of private Prayer, as it is to be daily performed, ſo it is in a more ſpecial Manner on thoſe Days that are ſet apart for the Worſhip and Service of God. What amazing Ingratitude muſt Man

* Matt. vi. 5, 6.

then be guilty of, when he ſpends theſe ſtated Times, that call for his ſerious Prayers and Praiſes, in mere Amuſements and Follies? What Excuſe ſhall he ever be able to make for the Neglect of this Duty? Give me Leave therefore to recommend to you the pious Reſolution of the holy Pſalmiſt; * "As for me, "I will call upon God, and the Lord ſhall "ſave me; Evening and Morning, and at "Noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he "ſhall hear my Voice."

In the next place, if you deſire to keep the Lord's Day holy, you muſt not only be conſtant in your public and private Devotions, but you muſt alſo make a good Uſe of what Time remains to you from thoſe Duties; and that you cannot better employ, than by reading God's holy Word, and in meditating ſeriouſly upon it.

I doubt not but that moſt of you have the holy Scriptures always ready at hand; do but conſider then the Advantages you may obtain, and the Dangers you may avoid, by peruſing them.

In theſe holy and divine Writings, are contained the Laws of Almighty God, the Terms upon which we may procure ourſelves everlaſting Life, and eſcape everlaſting Death: In them is there we may learn all thoſe Duties we are to perform, in order to our Happineſs; they ſhew us the only and direct Method to take ſure Poſſeſſion of that incorruptible Inheritance, that every reaſonable Man muſt moſt paſſionately deſire: They will effectually guide

* Pſal. lv. 16, 17.

s in the Acquisition of an eternal State, and ree us from all those subtil Tricks and Insinuations, that our Enemies can possibly invent to deprive us of our Joy, and frustrate us in our Happiness: They will point out o us all those fatal Rocks that we can possibly split upon: They will describe to us ll those dangerous Paths that would lead us o Destruction: They will shew us, as it were in a Glass, the Deformity of all Sin, nd at the same Time the Beauty and Comeliness of Piety. Here we may see, if we would but be at the Pains, (and who would not strive to be happy and eternally blessed!) the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World arraigned and condemned: Here we may see the sinful Lusts of the Flesh in their true and proper Colours, highly unbecoming Christian Purity, and utterly inconsistent with the Doctrine of the blessed *Jesus*. In a Word, we shall find here all the Works of the wicked One branded with Shame and Infamy; nay, these holy Oracles of God will describe to us the Way of Life, without any Error, and conduct us safe to the Haven of eternal Rest. And shall Man then foolishly lay aside this divine Book, and neglect to peruse it for his own Salvation? Put the Case that you were offered but a temporal Estate, upon the Condition of your understanding the Nature of Conveyances, and the Means you must necessarily make use of to secure it to yourselves; I am bold to say, you would be apt enough to busy yourselves in these Matters, and think

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no Time too much to be ſpent in qualifying yourſelves for its Enjoyment; and if ſo, will you have no Regard for an "Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reſerved for you in the Heavens?" Can you ever think one Day in ſeven too much for conſidering the Means to obtain it? Or can you neglect thoſe Precepts and Rules, which if carefully obſerved, will infallibly bring you to the happy Poſſeſſion of it?

Laſtly, If you would effectually keep holy the Lord's Day, you would do well ſeriouſly to meditate upon thoſe Paſſages of the holy Scriptures, that relate to the Creation of the World by God Almighty's Power, and to the Redemption of it by his only begotten and well beloved Son.

The *Jewiſh* Sabbath (as I have told you before) was appointed in Commemoration of the Creation of the World; and though the Chriſtian Church has changed the Day, in all Probability it never deſigned to change the primary End of its Inſtitution; but only to ſuperadd to it the Memorial of what the eternal Son of God has wrought for us in the Redemption of Man.

Theſe ought to be the Subjects of your ſerious Meditation upon the Lord's Day; you ſhould ſedately conſider, that God created all Things that are in Heaven and Earth, viſible or inviſible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; that he made the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Hoſts, the Earth and all Things that

e therein; that he formed the Light and reated Darkneſs; that he gave the Sun for a ight by Day, and the Moon and the Stars for Light by Night; that he ordained all theſe hings to manifeſt and declare his Wiſdom, is Power, and his Goodneſs. For as the poſtle ſpeaks*, "The inviſible Things of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen from the Creation of the World, being clearly underſtood by the Things that are made."

The due Conſideration of theſe Things will vidently ſhew us, that indiſpenſible Obligaion we are under to ſerve and honour the Creator; and eſpecially if we conſider farther hat † "in him we live, move, and have our "Being," we cannot but ſurely think it moſt equal and juſt, that we ſhould employ ourſelves o ſet forth his Glory, from whom we have received our Life and Being, and all our Faculties; and as we ſhould thus meditate upon God's Work of Creation, ſo ſhould we likewiſe upon that of our Redemption: The Scripture informs us that ‡ "when the Fulneſs of "Time was come, God ſent forth his Son "made of a Woman, made under the Law, "to redeem them that are under the Law, "that we might receive the Adoption of Sons: "§ Him being delivered by the determinate "Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, and "by wicked Hands crucified and ſlain, God "hath raiſed up; and that ſame Jeſus who was "thus crucified, God has made both Lord and

* Rom. i. 20. † Acts xvii. 28.
‡ Gal. iv. 4. § Acts ii. 23.

Chriſt,

"Christ *, and has exalted him with his "right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to "give Repentance to his People, and Forgive- "nefs of Sins;" and therefore, if Redemption from any temporal Captivity, if to be freed from the moſt cruel Bondage, be Matter for our joyous Praiſes; our Redemption from the cruel Tyranny of Satan, and Deliverance from the bitter Slavery of Sin, muſt be much more ſo. Let it therefore never juſtly be laid to your Charge, that after being once made ſenſible of the great and manifold Mercies of God, in the Creation and Redemption of the World, you will nevertheleſs neglect to honour Him, on that Day eſpecially which is particularly ſet apart for that End.

Nothing is more certain, than that the Obſervation of the Lord's Day amongſt the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians was very exemplary; that the Apoſtles were uſed conſtantly to aſſemble themſelves on ‡ this Day, there can be no manner of Doubt: For it was on this Day when they were met together, that our bleſſed Saviour appeared amongſt them; it was on this Day, that "the Holy Ghoſt "came viſibly ‡ down, and lighted upon "them;" nay, when St. *Paul* was taking his Leave at *Troas*, "upon § the firſt Day of the "Week the Diſciples came together." And the ſame Apoſtle, giving Directions to the *Corinthians*, about their contributing to the Neceſſities of their indigent Brethren, directs them to lay their charitable Contributions

* Acts v. 30. † John xx. 9.
‡ Acts ii. 3. § Acts xx. 7.

afide

ſide upon the firſt Day of the Week; which manifeſtly ſhews, that they held their religious Aſſemblies on that Day. And as the Apoſtles themſelves, ſo alſo the primitive Chriſtians, were afterwards very conſtant in their Obſervance of this Day, and that even in the Time of the hotteſt Perſecution; they always looked upon this Day as a Day to be obſerved with the greateſt Expreſſions of Joy, in Memorial of the Reſurrection of Chriſt. And it is well known, that the Emperor *Conſtantine* was no ſooner become a Chriſtian, but he commanded this Day to be ſolemnly obſerved by all Perſons whatſoever; and it was afterwards alſo enjoined by the Synod of *Illiberis*, that if any Citizen ſhould for three Lord's Days abſent himſelf from the Church, he ſhould be ſuſpended from Communion; nay, further, as a very learned Man obſerves, they allowed no ſeparate Aſſemblies, no Congregation but what met in the public Church; and this evidently ſhews with what ardent Zeal this Day was obſerved amongſt the ancient Chriſtians. This religious Practice of theirs ought to be exemplary to us, foraſmuch as we profeſs the ſame Faith, and purſue the ſame Glories of another World. Let the religious Service therefore of this Day always ſtand very high in your Regard, aſſuring yourſelves, that from the religious Obſervation, or from the careleſs Neglect of this Day, ſprings either our Happineſs, or our Miſeries, for when we obſerve it as we ought, in a pious Commemoration of God's infinite

Mercies

Mercies to Mankind, we make it an Earneſt of that everlaſting Reſt, which will compleat our final Happineſs in Heaven; ſo when we diſregard and abuſe it, we manifeſtly expoſe ourſelves to thoſe Puniſhments, which our God has denounced againſt the Violators of his divine Precepts, and indeed make it ſubſervient to the everlaſting Torment that will finally attend the Diſobedient.

I am your affectionate Friend, &c.

II. *A Serious Exhortation to* FREQUENT COMMUNION, *and to a careful Performance of our* RELIGIOUS VOWS.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

THE neceſſary Obligation that lies upon every Chriſtian, to partake of the bleſſed Body and Blood of Chriſt, is ſo very evident from the Words of the Inſtitution of the holy Sacrament itſelf, that it is hard to be imagined, how it could have been more poſitively enjoined: For, concerning the Bread, our bleſſed Lord moſt expreſsly ſays *, *Take, eat*; and concerning the Cup, *Drink* † *ye all of it*; nay, our Saviour plainly declares ‡, "That "except we eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, "and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us."

* Matt. xxvi. 26. † Verſe 27.
‡ John vi. 53.

And

nd therefore unleſs you deny the Authority the Holy Scriptures, which I willingly hope one of you do, this poſitive Duty being ſo xpreſsly commanded, when you refuſe or eglect your Obedience to this Command, you ill be thought to deſpiſe, not the Law of *Moſes*, but a Law, the Tranſgreſſion whereof uſt be deſerving of a far greater Puniſhment.

Our bleſſed Saviour commands us to "do this in * Remembrance of him;" and therere, when you ſeriouſly conſider this, you uſt needs look upon yourſelf under the high- Obligation to partake of this Feaſt; for e Remembrance of Chriſt, in the Reaſon the Command itſelf, ſhould rather point at oſterity, than at the Diſciples, to whom it as immediately given; becauſe, in all Proobility, his Diſciples, who had been his onſtant Attendants, and ſeen all his miralous Works, his aſtoniſhing Death, and oſt wonderful Reſurrection, could never rget this their Lord and Maſter, at leaſt ot ſoon after his Departure and Aſcenſion to Heaven: However, ſince it was thought eceſſary, that even the Diſciples themſelves ould be enjoined to partake of this holy eaſt, in Commemoration of their dead Lord, hom they could not be ſuppoſed ſoon to rget, you muſt think it much more incumnt upon Poſterity, and particularly upon us, whom the Ends of the World are come: o that from hence you will find Reaſon to ink yourſelf concerned in this Command,

* Luke xii. 19.

becauſe

becauſe not only by theſe Words of Chri himſelf, but alſo by the Apoſtles, it appear to concern Poſterity, and to be enjoined a the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity until the World's End*; "For as oft as ye eat this Bread, an "drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's "Death till he come." And upon this Ac count it has been the conſtant Practice of th primitive Church, and indeed of all Churches down to this preſent Time, to command th frequent Adminiſtration of this holy Sacrament, as being ſo very comfortable and advantageou to all thoſe who worthily receive it. And ſince I perſuade myſelf, you have too great a Sens of Religion to appear in God's Preſence as In truders, without having on your Wedding Garment, I think it my Duty to exhort you t array yourſelves with it upon every Opportunity that offers: upon every Invitation that is given you to this holy Feaſt; for who is there that can hear the gracious Invitations that are given, and conſider at the ſame Time the Boldneſs of the Farmer and Merchant in the Goſpel, and not ſecretly condemn their Folly, in inſiſting upon ſuch frivolous Excuſes?

The bleſſed Sacrament was inſtituted for the Renewing and Confirmation of the new Covenant, which our bleſſed Saviour purchaſed for us by his Death: into this Covenant we have been happily admitted by our Baptiſm; and as our Baptiſm is not to be repeated, we are therefore, as another great Inſtance of the divine Favour, called upon to renew and con-

* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

firm

rm our Baptiſmal Covenant, every Time we re invited to partake of the bleſſed Sacrament: Thus graciouſly giving us frequent Opportunities of making up ſuch Breaches as may happen between God and us; of giving reſh Security and Strength to our Obligations, nd of devoting ourſelves, in the moſt ſolemn Manner, to a more careful Service of our moſt racious Maſter; in Oppoſition to all thoſe piritual Enemies, that would take us off, and educe us from our Duty. So that this Sacrament is deſigned to guard and maintain the Covenant betwixt God and Man; that our Baptiſmal Vows may be ſtill farther enforced, nd that by this Means we may ſtill continue y his gracious Acceptance of us, when we meet him as we ought at his holy Table, his aithful Soldiers and Servants to our Lives End. What a wonderful Scene of Goodneſs then is his! what moſt adorable Mercy! That our moſt gracious God ſhould not only ſend his well-beloved Son into the World, to redeem oft Man, but alſo inſtitute ſuch divine Ordinances for our Comfort and Support in running he Race that is ſet before us? But the bleſſed acrament was not only inſtituted for the Renewing and Confirmation of the new Covenant, but alſo for the Commemoration of ur bleſſed Lord and Saviour himſelf: But hen it muſt be here conſidered, that our Saiour enjoins us much more than the bare Remembrance that there was ſuch a Perſon once n the World; becauſe he would undoubtedly ave us remember him in his Capacity and Relation

Relation to Mankind; which cannot but ef-
fectually endear the Remembrance of him
us. For if we look upon him as our Teach-
and Inſtructor, how engaging muſt he appe-
to us in this Reſpect? Nay, how advantageo-
and beneficial muſt it be to us, to call to mi-
thoſe moſt excellent Things that he hath re-
vealed? How that for his Sake, who ſuffer-
Death for us, we, who were utter Enemi-
to God, are happily put in a Way of Recon-
ciliation to his offended Majeſty, and are en-
titled to the Benefits of the new Covena-
which offers to us Pardon, Grace, and everla-
ing Happineſs! If we look upon Him as o-
King and Governor, we ſhall then remem-
the moſt gracious Laws and Precepts he h-
given us: As, that we ſhould love God; th-
we ſhould truſt in his divine Providence, a-
worſhip him in all poſſible Sincerity of Heart
but above all, by a holy and godly Life: Th-
we ſhould be humble and heavenly-minde-
chaſte, temperate, and contented: Nay fu-
ther, if we look upon him as our great Fri-
and Benefactor, we cannot but remember th-
exceeding and unparalleled Love, wherew-
he loved us, when he gave himſelf for us, a-
underwent a ſhameful and moſt painful De-
upon the Croſs, for our Redemption from S-
and Satan, and to procure for us at the la-
Time the moſt valuable Bleſſings that our N-
ture is capable of, that is, Pardon of Sin, a-
the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace.

Pardon of our Sins muſt be acknowledg-
to be of the higheſt Importance to us, as

are Offenders againſt the great King of Heaven; the vaſt Dangers that attend us, as we are Sinners; the Loſs of God's Favour; the Torment of a guilty Conſcience; the diſmal Apprehenſions of a terrible and aſtoniſhing Judgment; the inſupportable Pains of everlaſting Fire; muſt needs make our Deliverance from them riſe proportionably in our Eſteem, and ſhew us how invaluable this Bleſſing is, that conſiſts in the Pardon of our maniſold and dangerous Sins.

But further, the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace is another great Bleſſing vouchſafed us by this Inſtitution. It is this alone, that, after Pardon of our paſt Sins, can enable us to live in Holineſs, and ſecure us from dangerous Offences: For when by our zealous Attendance upon this holy Ordinance, as a Means appointed by God himſelf for the Conveyance of his divine Grace, we happily obtain his all-powerful Aſſiſtance; then, whatever Hazards and Difficulties may poſſibly attend us, we ſhall be enabled to ſurmount them all, by the Efficacy of that divine Strength, that will always be at hand to protect and defend us. Then, whatever pleaſing Temptations accoſt us, whatever Allurements are thrown before us, whatever ſpecious Pretences may be made for the Recommendation of Vice, and to take us off from our bounden Duty to God, will be all too weak to deceive us; and will be happily overpowered by that divine Principle of Grace that is within us. And if the bleſſed Sacrament was thus ordained as a Means to obtain

obtain the Pardon of our Sins, and the Assistance of divine Grace; can any reasonable Man think that he shall obtain the End without the Means? or, that it is not more advisable for him, to seek God in the Ordinances he himself has appointed, than in any Bye-ways of his own Imagination? Let therefore the due Sense of that indispensible Obligation that is upon you, (as you are a Christian) bring you frequently into God's most gracious Presence, to feast with your blessed Saviour at his holy Table; having first washed your Hands in Innocency*, and purified your Heart from all uncleanness: Because to turn your Backs upon your ever-blessed Redeemer, when he has prepared a spiritual Feast for your immortal Souls, must be an Affront of so daring a Nature, as cannot possibly be any way reconciled with that Submission and Obedience you owe to God, as your Saviour and Redeemer.

But then as you must look upon it as your Duty frequently to partake of the blessed Sacrament, so must you be exceeding careful in the Performance of those Vows you shall then make: And this being what I principally designed in this Exhortation, for your Encouragement herein, I beseech you seriously to consider the vast Advantages you will most certainly obtain by it. It is by this you will happily gain the Friendship of God; and the Advantages of his Friendship are so inexpressibly great, as must needs make you sin-

* Psal. xxvi. 6.

cerely

rely endeavour to obtain them: For if od be once your Friend, it is no matter no is your Enemy*: There is no Strength e His, who can inſtantly command all the wers of created Nature to be ſubſervient to divine Pleaſure. When you have once erefore procured the Favour of Heaven to cept graciouſly your Endeavours of Obedice, you need not then be under any Appreenſion of Danger †, "though the Earth ſhould be moved, or the Hills carried into the Midſt of the Sea." Then will you have no Reaſon all to be aſtoniſhed at the ſeemingly great wer of your Adverſaries; becauſe your iend, your heavenly Friend is infinitely re powerful, and can moſt effectually deoy them with the Blaſting of the Breath of Diſpleaſure.

And as by this Means you will ſecure to urſelves an infinitely powerful Friend; ſo ll you alſo one that is infinitely ‡ wiſe, and erefore able to diſcover all the wicked and cret Imaginations of the Hearts of Men ainſt thoſe, that ſincerely endeavour to obrve his divine Precepts: And this you are to ok upon as a farther Reaſon that you ſhould bour to gain his Friendſhip, becauſe though Friend may be ſufficiently powerful to ſupɾt and deliver you, when he finds you un- any Calamity or Oppreſſion; yet notithſtanding this, he may want that Wiſdom

* Job xii. 13, 16. † Pſal. xlvi. 2.
‡ Job xxxvi. 5.

to manage your Intereſts, as may oftentimes be found very neceſſary for your Defence and Preſervation: Man, in Power and Authority, may be able to defend his Brother; but then if there be a Deficiency in his Wiſdom, his Power may be eluded, and rendered utterly inſufficient to accompliſh, what it might with Eaſe effect under the Direction of Wiſdom and Foreſight. But if you have the Almighty and All-wiſe God your Friend, you have then all the moſt deſirable Perfections of Wiſdom and Power united in your Behalf.

And as God your Friend is thus infinitely powerful and infinitely wiſe, ſo, as the Perfection of all in reſpect to us, he is infinite in his Love: for though you have a powerful and a wiſe Friend, yet if his Affections may be any ways biaſſed, or diverted from you, and that without any Fault at all on your Part, of what Advantage then is his Power and Wiſdom in regard to you, when it will not be exerted, or made uſe of on your Account? But in the moſt exalted, and moſt delightful Friendſhip of God, there can be no poſſible Defect; for his Love, as it is infinite, ſo it is moſt ſincere and immutable; and for that Reaſon cannot fail to excite his Power and Wiſdom in your Defence, in caſe you are not wanting to yourſelves in the Diſcharge of your Duty; * "For his Ways are not "as Man's Ways;" and therefore though you may be cauſeleſly deſerted by your Temporal Friends, yet you may reſt aſſured, that you

* Iſa. lv. 9.

God

God will never leave you nor forſake you, as ong as you heartily endeavour after Holineſs, nd preſerve yourſelves Objects worthy his di- ine Love and Protection.

But further; by your careful Endeavour to erform your religious Vows, you will moſt ertainly receive from Heaven, as a Conſe- uence of your Friendſhip with God, ſuch ll-ſufficient Portions of divine Grace, as will oſt effectually defend and ſecure you againſt ll the dangerous Temptations of your moſt veterate Enemy the Devil; for though he oes about continually ſeeking whom he may evour, yet by the happy Influence of divine race, you will be enabled to * "ſtand in the evil Day; and having done all, to ſtand;" r this will moſt aſſuredly arm you with ſuch vincible Weapons, as will utterly defeat all e Deſigns and Contrivances of Hell, and ill carry you with a bleſſed Triumph through e Vale of Miſery, to the everlaſting Regions Peace and Tranquillity: This will make u moſt compleatly victorious, nay, even ore than Conqueror; and will at length own you with an immortal Crown of never- ding Glory.

You may expect, indeed, and therefore it ay not be unneceſſary to warn you before- nd, that the Powers of Darkneſs will at- mpt all poſſible ‡ Methods to ruin your holy eſolutions; inſomuch that no Craft or Sub- ty of theirs will be wanting to deſtroy

* Eph. vi. 13. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 8.

them, before they are brought to any Perfection, and bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance: To this End, all our Weakneſſes and Infirmities will be attacked, Temptations will be adapted and ſuited to the moſt prevalent of your Affections; by that Means, if poſſible, to overcome you, to beat down your weakeſt Defences, and enter in, and bring you into Captivity: But then the powerful Grace of your God will ſtrengthen all your Infirmities, and ſtand as a watchful Guard over all the Avenues of your Heart; and would you not heartily wiſh for ſuch a Defence? Would you not even labour to obtain it? Your temporal Adverſaries may perhaps ſecretly combine, and lay their Snares for your Ruin and Deſtruction; but that at moſt can be only the Death of the Body: For when that is once brought to the Duſt, what can they poſſibly do more? Then their Envy and their Malice muſt fail; for they cannot poſſibly purſue you into another World. But your ſpiritual Enemies are of another Kind; they purſue with Eagerneſs the Deſtruction of your immortal Souls, and therefore they will labour to woo you as it were into Miſery; and by pleaſing your irregular Affections, to betray you into their Power; they will not fail to lay before you the Gaiety, the Splendor, the Riches and Satisfactions of this World, repreſenting them in falſe Colours, thereby, if poſſible, to amuſe and enſnare you: But then, as the good Apoſtle declares *, by the Grace of God, you

* 2 Cor. ix. 9.

will

will be able to do all Things, to withſtand and defeat all ſuch like Inſinuations, and to fight victoriouſly under the Banner of the great Captain of your Salvation.

But laſtly; if you are careful in the Performance of thoſe religious Vows you make, when you partake of God's holy Table; you will at laſt obtain an eternal, and therefore an invaluable Crown. The Dignity and Honour of a temporal Crown, is uſually valued above all Things that this World affords; and upon this Account we oftentimes hear of hot Contentions, and reſolute Endeavours to obtain one: But if the periſhing Diadems of this World are ſought with ſo much Warmth and Affection, and with almoſt indefatigable Induſtry; how muſt it tend to a Man's Reproach, when he is unaccountably negligent and careleſs in endeavouring to obtain that Crown which is of an infinite Value; and therefore, upon Account of its * Excellency, can bear no manner of Proportion to any Thing that can be found amongſt the Products of this tranſient State? The moſt complete Enjoyment of the higheſt temporal Felicities and Satisfactions, is by no Means equal to the Soul of Man, as not being of Permanency ſufficient to yield her an entire Complacency. No! they are all frail, and of a momentary Nature; and therefore muſt needs deſert her before ſhe comes into Eternity. It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that the Soul of

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Man is too often taught to eſteem the Things of this World far beyond their Deſert; for what through the Craft and Subtilty of the Wicked, what by the Allurements and Stratagems of the Powers of Darkneſs, and by a pleaſing Miſrepreſentation of Things, ſhe is many Times taught to call Evil Good, and Good Evil: But this is in Truth nothing elſe but the Effect of a falſe Light that is held before her by her moſt implacable Foes, on purpoſe to extinguiſh her divine Light, to leſſen and depreſs her ſpiritual Perfections, in order to bring down and rank her Being amongſt thoſe that are material; though you know it was an Obſervation of the wiſeſt of Men, eſtabliſhed upon the eternal Truth of the Soul's Immortality, that "the Body † ſhall "return to the Earth from whence it was, but "the Spirit to God who gave it." And truly, it is upon this ſtrong Foundation, that the whole Syſtem or Body of Chriſtianity does depend; for if when Death deſtroys the Body, as daily Inſtances convince us it will, it has the ſame Effect upon the Soul, and renders it as inſenſible as it does the Body, there is then no Room for Encouragement in the Purſuit of any Thing beyond this Life. But, the rational Faculties of Man's Soul cannot think upon Annihilation without Horror; nor reaſon themſelves out of their Immortality, except only when clouded by Paſſion, and debauched by Vice and Immorality; and for this Reaſon the moſt comfortable Enjoyment of an ever-

† Eccleſ. xii. 7.

laſting

laſting Crown, though it be in Futurity, ſhould yet have more ſenſible Effects upon Man's Mind, than any Thing that is preſent; becauſe what he obtains here, cannot but be attended with manifold † Imperfections; whereas the great God, whoſe Enjoyment he hopes for hereafter, and that by his ſtedfaſt Faith and dutiful Obedience here, is infinite in all Perfections, and therefore cannot poſſibly fail of being an Object ſufficient for his everlaſting Happineſs. It is a Crown then that is incorruptible, and that fades not away, which is in your View. It is a Crown free from all Difficulties and Incumbrances in the Enjoyment; and therefore what muſt very amply reward you, for all the Perils and Dangers you may meet with in its Search. It is a Crown which, when you once obtain, you ſhall never be deprived of; but it will afford you unſpeakable Joy and Conſolation for ever and ever. And muſt not then this its moſt tranſcendant Excellency, ſhamefully condemn all our Lukewarmneſs and Indifference? For what! ſhall Man be unconcerned in Matters of the greateſt Moment, even ſuch as relate to his everlaſting Peace? Shall he ever thus miſerably debaſe the rational Powers and Faculties of his Soul, as not to fix them upon Heaven and its moſt raviſhing Joys?

Our common Notions of Joy and Pleaſure, though they are only proportioned to ſuch Things as we find upon the Stage of this

† Eccleſ. i. 2.

World, yet are oftentimes big with the Deſire of Fruition, though it ſeldom or never happens but the Enjoyment ſoon grows nauſeous, having in its Compoſition ſuch incorporated Bitterneſs, as is altogether ſufficient to ſhew its Imperfection and Vanity; and if the Notions of theſe Things are uſually thus accompanied with Deſire of enjoying, even tho' we have experienced a Deficiency in the objects deſired; it is but very reaſonable, that the Apprehenſions we are able to frame of heavenly Things, ſhould carry us with ſuitable Deſires after their Enjoyment: As therefore you would deſire the Friendſhip of God, the all-ſufficient Aſſiſtance of his divine Grace, and the Enjoyment of an infinitely glorious Crown hereafter, I exhort you all to be frequent in your Approaches to the Lord's Table, and to be very careful and diligent in the religious Performance of the Vows you ſhall there make; ſtill perſevering in all Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, even "though you * ſuf-"fer with Chriſt here, that you may happily "reign with him in his Glory hereafter;" which is the hearty and fervent Prayer of

Your ſincere Friend and Servant, &c.

* Rom. viii. 17.

III. *A Seribus Exhortation to a* Decent *and* Devout Behaviour *in the* Church.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

THE great Concerns of Religion are of ſo ſerious a Nature, foraſmuch as they immediately relate to our everlaſting Peace, that we cannot reaſonably look upon ourſelves as unconcerned in the due Conſideration of them: And becauſe our good God has been graciouſly pleaſed to inſtitute holy and divine Ordinances, as Means deſigned to produce in thoſe who with Fear and Reverence diligently frequent them, all the precious and moſt deſirable Fruits of the Spirits; I preſume therefore earneſtly to exhort and beſeech you, not only conſtantly to frequent God's Houſe, at the ſolemn and ſtated Times of Prayer, but alſo to behave yourſelves there in ſuch a Manner, as may teſtify and declare a due Senſe of that divine and tremendous Majeſty you come there to worſhip and adore. When *Moſes* was to appear before the divine Preſence *, he was commanded by God himſelf to put his Shoes from off his Feet; to ſignify, that the divine Preſence was not to be approached without all Reverence and Humility. The immenſe Majeſty of our God muſt needs call for our moſt

* Exod. iii. 3.

decent and humble Deportment in his Courts; inſomuch that were the Notions of God's Preſence lively impreſſed upon our Hearts, we ſhould not be guilty of the leaſt Miſbehaviour and Irreverence in his Service; we ſhould not then appear before him in ſuch unbecoming Poſtures, as is too commonly ſeen in our Churches; but we ſhould be ſtedfaſtly intent upon thoſe great Concerns we come there to tranſact, being thoroughly awed by the due Apprehenſions of his moſt glorious Preſence.

When our bleſſed Saviour * promiſed his Diſciples, that "where two or three of them "were gathered together, there would he be "in the Midſt of them;" it was, we may reaſonably think, very natural for them in ſuch Caſes, and at ſuch Times, to be careful in their Behaviour, out of the juſt Apprehenſion they had of his Preſence. And indeed, would we be but at the Pains ſeriouſly to reflect upon the Matter, and conſider, as we ought, that when we are aſſembled in the Church of God, there our ever-bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer is in the Midſt of us; who is there that could be ſo bold and audacious as to ſhew him any the leaſt Diſreſpect? Were he viſible, and to be ſeen by the Eye in his glorious Majeſty among us, we ſhould in all Probability have ſuch a Senſe of his Greatneſs, as would ſhew our Dependance and Subjection. And what! ſhall not the divine Preſence of our God, though it be the Object only of our

* Matt. xviii. 20.

Faith

Faith, equally conſtrain us to our Duty and Obedience? Nay, are there not as great Obligations upon us (as we are Chriſtians) to reverence and adore our bleſſed Lord, though we do not behold him with our bodily Eyes, as if He appeared amongſt us viſibly in the Excellency of his Glory? The pious and devout Chriſtian therefore will never enter into the Courts of the Lord's Houſe, but he will obſerve the Inſtructions of the wiſe Man, to keep his * Feet with all poſſible Care; to regulate himſelf as becomes an humble Penitent, and as one who would heartily ſupplicate offended Majeſty.

And if this be any Part of the Character of a ſincere Chriſtian, as moſt undoubtedly it is, I truſt that I may have juſt Grounds to hope that this ſhort Exhortation may find a Place in your Breaſts, and help to rectify what may be amiſs as to your Deportment in God's Houſe. "I beſeech you therefore, Brethren "ſuffer the Word of Exhortation," that whenever your Feet enter into the Houſe of your God, your Heart may be ſeriouſly fixed upon the Majeſty of that everlaſting King whoſe Courts you tread; that it may be full of, and ready to overflow with his Praiſe, and the public Declaration of thoſe † Wonders he has done for the Children of Men.

And as you cannot poſſibly make uſe of better Means to this End, than the Liturgy or Service of the Church of *England*, provided you make a right Uſe of it, and are

* Eccleſ. v. 1. † Pſal. cvii. 15.

truly desirous of the Advantage it will afford you; for when we worship God in our Parish-Churches with Sincerity of Heart, we need not doubt but we do it in the Beauty of Holiness *: And therefore, I would most earnestly exhort you to continue stedfast in the Communion of this Church; for notwithstanding great Pretences may be made to better Edification in separate Meetings, yet in Reality it is not so easy to be found.

The best Institutions may be abused and rendered ineffectual, through the Fault of the Observer; and therefore I intreat every one of you, that when you are entered into the Church of God, you would humbly fall down upon your Knees, and put up your private Requests to God, in the Words annexed to the End of this Exhortation, or in other such like preparatory Expressions; and having devoutly done this, when the most excellent Service of the Church begins, you are all to stand up, and attend diligently to the Exhortation read by the Minister, which will at all Times encourage you in your Duty.

When this is read, then you are to kneel down with the Priest in Confession to Almighty God, not only with your Hearts, but also with your Lips; after which, you are silently, and without repeating it after the Priest, (as the Manner of some mistaken People is) to receive the Absolution pronounced upon such and upon such only, as truly repent; humbly

* See Dr. Bisse's *Beauty of Holiness in the Common Prayer.*

beſeeching God to accept your Confeſſions, and to account you in the Number of thoſe whoſe Sins are forgiven; and then with devout Hearts and Hands lifted up to Heaven, you are to ſay the Prayer which the Lord himſelf hath taught us.

When you have thus addreſſed your God in the Words given you by his only-begotten and well-beloved Son; you are to riſe from your Knees, and apply yourſelves diligently to bear your proper Part in the Praiſes of your God, ſtanding with your Book in your Hand, in the moſt ſerious and compoſed Manner: And becauſe this Part of our Service cannot but be wholly omitted, or at beſt but partly performed, without the Help of your Common-Prayer Book, you ſhould therefore always look upon that as your beſt Companion, and think yourſelves deficient in your Duty when you want it upon theſe Occaſions.

The Happineſs of our being in Heaven hereafter, will in great Part conſiſt in ſinging Praiſes to our God; and the more we exerciſe ourſelves in this Duty here, the more apt and ready ſhall we be for its Performance in Heaven. The Pſalms uſed in our Churches alternately by the Prieſt and People, are a Reſemblance of the Seraphims * crying to each other in Heaven, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God "of hoſts: Heaven and Earth are full of thy "Glory." Let your Common-Prayer Book therefore never be left uſeleſs at Home, when it may aſſiſt you in the Performance of this Part of God's holy Worſhip, and happily by that

* Iſa. vi. 3.

Means

Means be inſtrumental to the Salvation of your immortal Souls.

When the Pſalms are ended, then you are to attend with the utmoſt Care to the Reading of thoſe Portions of Scripture that are appointed for the Leſſons; conſidering them as the Rule of your Duty, and what muſt direct you in the Way to the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, which is above. When you hear therefore the Holy Scriptures read, you would do well to make Application of them to yourſelves, whether it be to inform your Ignorance, or to reform whatſoever is irregular in your Lives and Converſations. The Holy Scriptures are the Chriſtian's moſt valuable Treaſure, and do therefore juſtly claim our Reverence and Eſteem; it is by Help of them that we are, as it were, to purchaſe an heavenly Kingdom *, and lay ſuch a Foundation of our future and everlaſting Happineſs, as will never fail. So that when you hear any Part of them read, you may very well imagine that you hear God ſpeaking to you, and giving you Directions how you may obtain his moſt gracious Favour.

When the Leſſons are read, and you have borne your Parts in the Hymns that follow, you are to ſtand up to make Confeſſion of your Faith. The † Faith of a true Chriſtian is the very Baſis and Foundation upon which muſt ſtand the whole Fabrick of his Religion; foraſmuch as it is by this he muſt be ſaved; and therefore he ſhould confeſs it

* John v. 39. † Rom. iii. 2. 8. *and* Heb. xi. 6.

with

with a becoming Reſolution. It is ſaid to have been the Practice of ſome Churches, for the People, at the repeating of the Creed, whether it were that commonly called the *Apoſtles*, the *Nicene* or *Athanaſian*, to lay their Hands upon their Swords, expreſſing thereby their Readineſs to defend and ſupport it at all Adventures. And though this Cuſtom does not prevail amongſt us, yet nevertheleſs when we publickly confeſs our Faith, we ſhould always do it with ſuch Fervency and Zeal, as will teſtify our Reſolutions to live and die in it, and to maintain it againſt all Oppoſition. The Faith which you profeſs, whether it be in the Uſe of either of the Three Creeds allowed by the Church of *England*, is moſt aſſuredly the true primitive Chriſtian Faith, founded upon the Holy Scriptures, and containing nothing but what may be juſtly drawn from thence. And therefore whatſoever the bold *Arians* or *Socinians*, Men that dare to diſpute, in effect, the Divine Nature of God the Son, may ſuggeſt and inſinuate to the contrary, every one ought to be exceeding careful not to leave the old Paths, nor deſert that divine Truth for which the moſt glorious Army of Martyrs have ſhed their innocent Blood, and are now, by the Efficacy of that Faith, in the heavenly City of their God.

After this free and public Confeſſion of your Faith, you are to put yourſelf into the moſt humble Poſture of Prayer, meekly kneeling upon your Knees; for as to the Poſture

in

in Prayer, this of Kneeling upon your Knees you must think most suitable, if you will be determined herein either by Reason or the Practice of holy Men; for you cannot but think it very reasonable, that you should glorify God in your Body, as well as in your Soul, if you have any Regard to the * Apostle, when he beseeches you "by the Mercies of "God, to present your Body a living Sacrifice, "holy, and acceptable to God, which is your "reasonable Service;" and accordingly we find this practised by holy Men of old; as for Instance, King *Solomon*, when he dedicated the † Temple, "kneeled upon his Knees before all "the Congregation of *Israel*." *Daniel* also "‡ kneeled upon his Knees and prayed." And if we add to these, the Examples that may be produced out of the New Testament, it must, one would think, shame Men out of their careless and irreverent Postures in the Church. The Posture which our blessed Saviour himself used in Prayer § we are assured was the most humble; and it is expressly affirmed of his Apostle St. *Peter* ‖, "that he kneeled down "and prayed;" as it is also of St. *Paul* **; the same is recorded of St. *Stephen* ††; and from this last Instance we may learn, that this Posture in Prayer is not a Thing of so much Indifference as some may imagine, since this holy Martyr could not be beat out of it by all the furious Assaults of his Murderers.

* Rom. xii. 1. † 2 Chron. vi. 13. ‡ Dan. vi. 10. § Matt. xxvi. 39. ‖ Acts ix. 40. ** Acts xx. 36. *and* xxi. 5. †† Acts vii. 60.

But

But further, if, as an * antient Father obrves, when we pray, we ſpeak unto God ur Almighty Creator, we ſhould therefore ave a juſt Regard to his infinite Majeſty, and ffer up our Petitions with ſuch an humble enſe of our own Unworthineſs, as becomes oſe that ſupplicate for Pardon at his Throne f Grace; let your Attention therefore be ſeouſly fixed upon your Prayers, as they are ffered up by the Miniſter, ſilently going long with him in your Hearts, and adding a cent and fervent *Amen* to every Prayer, as ou are directed by the *Rubric*; thereby givg your hearty Aſſent to, and expreſſing your eſire of ſuch Things as are prayed for in the ongregation of the Saints.

Prayers being ended, you are to riſe again om your Knees, and praiſe God in Pſalms, nd Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs; after which llows the Sermon, which you are to look pon as very proper for Inſtruction in Righouſneſs; for as the Word of God, the Holy criptures, are the Rule of all Preaching, ſo r as it explains or teaches Doctrines agreeble to what is there revealed, it muſt be of xcellent Uſe to the People: You are not inced to account this the principal Part of God's oly Worſhip; becauſe Prayers and Praiſes e Eſſentials, and therefore are moſt certainly be preferred before Preaching; the End of hich is, in great Meaſure, to exhort you to e ſincere Performance of thoſe principal uties. There is indeed an evil Spirit that is

* Saint *Auſtin.*

too

too frequent in the World, that gives Men itching Ears, and makes them prefer not only preaching in general, but even one Preacher before another. And yet the Apoſtle ſeems to determine this Matter, and tells us, that when one ſays I am of "* *Paul*, and another "I am of *Apollos*," they were carnal; and therefore, though there be great Difference in Men's Abilities and Elocution, (which are Things deſervedly commendable in themſelves) yet I moſt earneſtly beſeech you, that whenever you hear the Word of God preached, you would labour to hear it to your own real Advantage, not ſo much to pleaſe your Ears as to benefit your Souls; and if you are under ſuch a Diſpoſition as this, you may improve yourſelves even by the meaneſt of Preachers, and therefore ought not to think your Time ſpent in vain, though your Curioſity ſhould not be ſo much gratified, as your ſpiritual Concerns may be advanced.

The Sermon being finiſhed, you are chearfully to receive the Bleſſing; beſeeching God that you may, by virtue of his holy Ordinances, arrive at laſt at the Haven where you would be, in the heavenly *Canaan*, and the everlaſting Manſions of the Bleſſed.

And now, having led you through the whole Service, and given you ſome ſhort Direction for your Behaviour therein; it remains only that I renew my Exhortation, that as you tender the Salvation of your Souls, the Glory of God here, and the perfect and complete Fru-

* 1 Cor. i. 12. *and* Chap. iii. 4.

on of Him hereafter, you would ſeriouſly onſider theſe Things, ſo that they may ſink eep into your Hearts, and have that happy nfluence upon you, in regard to your modeſt nd decent Behaviour in God's Houſe, as ay teſtify you are Chriſtians indeed, thoſe at fear God, and do ſtedfaſtly reſolve to eep his Commandments; and becauſe you now the royal Pſalmiſt tells us, that he was ad when they ſaid unto him * "Let us go into the Houſe of the Lord;" therefore in nitation of his Holineſs and Devotion, you ould let no Opportunity eſcape you of wor-ipping in public the Lord your God.

I am,

Your very affectionate Friend, &c.

* Pſal. cxxii. 1.

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hen you firſt come into the Church, kneel upon your Knees, and ſay devoutly:

et the Words of my Mouth, and the Medi-tation of my Heart, be always acceptable in thy Sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

O Moſt merciful God, give me Grace to make the beſt Uſe of my Time in thy ouſe, and graciouſly accept us all who come ther to preſent ourſelves, our Souls and Bo-dies,

dies, before thee, for *Jesus Christ* his Sa who vouchsafed to present himself in the Te ple for us in great Love and Humility. *A*

Before you depart out of the Church, bu bly kneel upon your Knees, and say;

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the Beginning, is now and e shall be, World without End. *Amen.*

O Most mighty and eternal Lord God, bl ed be thy great and glorious Name this gracious Opportunity we have now enjo ed of praising Thee for thy Mercies, and ma ing our Wants known unto Thee, throu the Merits of our blessed Saviour *Jesus Chr Amen.*

Salvation be unto our God, and to t Lamb for ever and ever.

IV. *A Serious Exhortation to a Re rent Use of* God's *holy Name common Discourse.*

Dearly beloved Brethren,

THE almost universal Corruption of Ma kind, by the too fashionable Sin *common Swearing*, will, I hope, incline y to take this Exhortation in good Part, a esteem it as the necessary Duty of every Chri ti

n to endeavour what in him lies to put a
p to this moſt dangerous Practice. The
re common and general the Tranſgreſſions
this Nature are, the more Zeal is required
confronting them, leſt the whole Race of
en be carried away by the fatal Stream;
l rather than diſturb the imaginary Peace
the Profane, become Partakers with them
their moſt enormous Sins.

To ſuch a fatal Height is arrived the Pro-
eneſs of this Age, that many can ſcarce
en their Lips, but immediately fly out nu-
rous Oaths and Imprecations; and that
hout the leaſt Provocation, and tending to
manner of End, unleſs deſigned to aſtoniſh
l amaze thoſe that are of a more ſober and
ious Deportment: For there cannot be a
ater Affront offered to a true Profeſſor of
riſtianity, than for Men to abuſe the God
om they adore, and even call upon him to
troy them.

Let me intreat you therefore, with all the
ncerity of an hearty Friend, that whenever
u make mention of God's holy Name, you
uld weigh and conſider his infinite Juſtice,
reatneſs, and Power; and by that Means
mble your Hearts with the greateſt Reve-
ce before Him, when you pronounce his
ſt adorable Name.

The *Jews*, whilſt they were zealous for the
ruth, * reverence the Name of God in
e higheſt Manner, as being his Memorial:
d how then dare the Chriſtians, who are

* Exod. iii. 15.

now

now under a purer Diſpenſation, call upon
without that Reverence it juſtly claims fro
all created Beings?

But that this Exhortation may carry th
greater Weight, I ſhall lay before you th
Dangers that attend this too popular Sin
common Swearing. When you conſider
then as a manifeſt Breach of one of God'
holy Commandments, * you muſt neceſſari
think, that, like other Sins, it muſt render yo
liable and obnoxious to God's Wrath: He h
moſt expreſly declared, "that he will not ho
"him guiltleſs," that is, will undoubtedly pu
niſh him "that takes his Name in vain;"
and much more then him that does preſump
tuouſly profane it, without a ſincere and hear
Repentance intervene. Dreadful Words thefe
and worthy our moſt ſerious Conſideration
inaſmuch as they import a peculiar Guilt tha
attends this Sin, agreeable to its flagrant Na
ture; and are altogether ſufficient, when duly
weighed, to terrify the boldeſt and moſt pre
ſumptuous Sinner: For, ſhall wretched Ma
think to outbrave Heaven, and dare to pro
voke his God, as if he was ſtronger than hi
Maker?

When Men ſlight, and act contrary to hu
man Laws, they naturally fear the Puniſh
ments annexed to them; and yet they dail
and without Fear violate God's holy Com
mands, and wilfully break through all tho
Obligations, which the due Conſideration o
everlaſting Anguiſh and Miſery ſhould la

* Exod. xx. 7.

upo

on them. But ſhould they do this with npunity, when it is the higheſt Affront they n poſſibly put upon the Divine Majeſty, to ake even a By-word of his holy Name, and piouſly bring Him in upon every Turn, and ery frivolous Occaſion, to vouch their Fol- s?

This moſt pernicious Evil has indeed ſo far evailed amongſt us, as to have infected the enerality of the People, and the Univerſa- y of the Sin makes it but too little regarded: ut this will never be found a ſufficient Plea r its Guilt; for though many may perhaps ink unadviſedly, that where great Numbers e, there they themſelves may ſafely be; yet know God aſſures us of the Falſity of this, d commands us, "not to follow a Multi- tude to do Evil *."

But further, this Sin ought to be looked on as very dangerous; and becauſe it will enſibly lead us into the Sin of Perjury; for a conſtant and daily Practice of common earing, we ſhall at length be brought to h a Paſs, that an Oath will be much more miliar to us than the Truth: Inſomuch that hen we raſhly utter what is doubtful or falſe, ſhall be apt to ſeal and confirm it with an ath, before we give ourſelves Time to con- er what we are Swearing: And thus by de- ees we ſhall be led on to ſwear that which manifeſtly falſe, to play, as it were, with erlaſting Burnings, and ſport ourſelves in flaming Guilt of repeated Perjury. On this

* Exod. xxxiii. 2.

Conſideration therefore, the Advice of an ancient Father is very proper, who would have us to avoid a too common Practice of Swearing, even that which is true; becauſe by the too frequent Practice of Swearing, Men oftentimes fall into Perjury, and are always in Danger of it: But I would not be thought here to inſinuate, that it is not lawful to ſwear at all, when we are legally called to it before the Magiſtrate, becauſe we may and ought to do this *; but then it muſt be, as the Prophet teaches †, "in Judgment, Truth, and Righ-"teouſneſs."

The Sin of *common Swearing* is very dangerous, as it is the moſt extravagant Abuſe of that Faculty, which God in Mercy has vouchſafed us, in order to praiſe and glorify his holy Name: For the Faculty of Speech, as it is highly uſeful in all the Affairs of this Life, ſo was there yet a greater End deſigned in this Bleſſing, namely, to ſet forth the Praiſes of that immenſe Being, that formed Man out of the Duſt by the Almighty Power of his Word. And accordingly, in a juſt Apprehenſion of this, the holy Pſalmiſt ‡ very frequently makes this divine Uſe of his Tongue: And though his glorious Example in this Caſe is made by too many of very ſmall Account, nay, even our bleſſed Saviour's own Directions diſregarded, when He commands us §, "not to "ſwear at all: Neither by Heaven, for it is "God's Throne: Nor by the Earth, for it is his

* Exod. xxii. 11.
† Jer. iv. 2.
‡ Pſal. xxxv. 28.
§ Matt. v. 34.

Footſtool:

Footstool: But to let your Communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: Because whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil." Yea, I ſt earneſtly intreat you, never to think, with Impious and Profane, that your Lips are r own; that you have no Superior to con- l you; or that you may innocently call God witneſs the moſt trivial and inſignificant of r Diſcourſes: For you cannot do this with- infinite Danger, that muſt neceſſarily ariſe m the Abuſe of that Faculty of Speech which d has given you, and is by no Means to be s wickedly employed; but ought rather to always ſetting forth and declaring the * high iſes of your God.

As the Danger of calling upon God to teſ- our moſt inſignificant Aſſertions, muſt ſt certainly be very great; ſo when we call on Him raſhly, as an Executioner, and uld have Him do for us the Work of an enger, in our Execrations, Curſes, ill iſhes, and Imprecations; this is ſtill, if ſible, attended with yet greater Danger r how is it poſſible for a Man to call upon d to damn himſelf, without infinite Dan- r? Since ſhould God be as ready to hear l inflict Vengeance, as Man ſeems to de- and call for it, he could not but be in- ntly moſt miſerable! Nay, how can he ire the Deſtruction and everlaſting Miſery his Brother, without incurring at the ſame me the Guilt of thoſe other Sins that uſu-

* Pſalm cxlix. 6.

ally accompany it; ſuch as Hatred, Malice, Uncharitableneſs, and the like?

The Dangers that attend this wicked Practice being ſo manifeſtly great, when you have conſidered what Excuſes can poſſibly be made for it, I hope, you will ſee very juſt Reaſon to abhor all ſuch profane Converſation, as it ſtrikes at the very Authority of God, and diſputes and contemns his Power.

The moſt common Excuſe that is offered, is *Cuſtom*; but I deſire you would ſeriouſly conſider; whether the Frequency of any Sin can poſſibly leſſen its Guilt; for does it not rather increaſe it? It cannot be alledged, that this Profaneneſs is an innocent Cuſtom; and if it be a wicked one, as moſt certainly it is, it is then high Time that we ſhould break it. But if it be further ſaid in Excuſe, that this Profaneneſs is the Effect of Paſſion, and therefore the more excuſeable; this is altogether as unreaſonable as the former: For when an ungrateful Object moves your Paſſion, and raiſes any Diſorder in your Breaſt, is there the leaſt Reaſon why you ſhould, upon that Account, fly as it were in the Face of God, and abuſe your Creator, by Reaſon of Affronts received; ſo that, as a great Man has obſerved, you may as well, and upon as juſt Grounds, ſtab your own Father, to revenge an Injury received from another Hand, as blaſpheme God, becauſe your Paſſions are raiſed by your profane Companions?

But if any Man is ſo abandoned by common Senſe, as to urge in Excuſe, that he com-

ommits this Sin becauſe he is aſhamed to do therwiſe when he happens amongſt licentious nd profane Company, becauſe ſober Diſourſe is uſually made by ſuch the Object of idicule; let him remember what our bleſſed aviour tells us*, "that whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of him and his Word, of him will He *himſelf* be aſhamed, when he comes in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels:" And then ſure he will not make hame an Excuſe for that Sin, which it is a oſt horrid Shame for him to commit.

If any Thing elſe can be offered in Excuſe r this Sin, it may perhaps be Intemperance; ut this will never be admitted as a juſt Plea, ecauſe as the Repetition of the ſame Crime ever leſſens, but rather aggravates its Guilt; a Sin of any Sort can never extenuate the uilt of another. As all the Excuſes therere, that can poſſibly be offered for this moſt ngerous Practice, are of no real Moment, nd the evil Conſequences of continuing it apparently great, you cannot, I humbly reſume, but think yourſelves highly obliged work out your Repentance by a ſpeedy eformation; becauſe the longer you continue this moſt inexcuſable Sin, the heavier ill be the Load of your Guilt, and conſeuently the more difficult to be removed; noing is more certain, than that as long as ou continue in its Practice, you may be juſtly harged either with the greateſt Folly, or the reateſt Preſumption; becauſe you muſt either

* Mark viii. 38.

believe, or else you must deny, that there is a God: If you believe there is such a Being, infinite in all Perfections, and, consequently, infinitely just and holy; you cannot possibly in your sober and sedate Thoughts imagine, but that it is the utmost Height of Presumption for you to abuse his Honour, and affront his Majesty; for even the Princes of the Earth would not suffer such manifold Indignities as are daily put upon the great King of Kings, with all the audacious Boldness that can be conceived; but if, on the contrary, you take Part with the Atheist, and disbelieve the Being of a God, even then you must acknowledge, that nothing can be more ridiculous than your common Oaths, nor a greater Instance of your Folly, than to swear by that which you believe is not. And thus you see the profane Atheist appears even to be destitute of common Sense, because he swears by that which he believes has no Existence; and therefore upon his own Principles, his Oath can be of no Manner of Signification.

But notwithstanding this too popular Sin cannot upon any warrantable Grounds be defended; yet nothing is more common than this great Abuse of God's Name, not only in Commerce betwixt Man and Man, but also in their Diversions, Communications, and Reasonings: but surely these Things might be transacted amongst Christians with a much more commendable Grace, than by thus profaning the most holy and reverend Name of our God. For if this be done to gain Cre-

dit,

it, it ſhould not be taken amiſs, that the ober Part of Mankind muſt of Neceſſity look pon his Credit to be very low, who endeavours to ſupport it at the Peril of his Immortal Soul. Good God! that we ſhould ive to hear thy moſt adorable and bleſſed Name thus grievouſly abuſed! That we hould ever ſuffer ſuch Indignities to be caſt pon thy infinite Majeſty! Surely it is moſt greatly to be lamented by all ſerious Chriſtians, that notwithſtanding in the Third Commandment Men are expreſsly forbidden, as I have already obſerved, to "take the Name "of the Lord their God in vain;" yet ſuch is their outrageous Licentiouſneſs, as to make not only a vain, but even a profane Uſe of it in their common Diſcourſe, as if it were not worthy the leaſt Reverence or Reſpect; when many Times the profane Wretch that thus preſumes to contemn his Creator, cannot himſelf bear the leaſt Diſreſpect or Infringement upon his own imaginary Honour, but is immediately for ſacrificing every Thing that diſturbs his Paſſion: And can he ever think, that the great God of Heaven ſhall ſtand ſtill (if I may ſo ſpeak) and hear his holy Name blaſphemed, his Honour vilified, and his Power ridiculed? Shall He not rather make ready his Arrows upon the String, and reſolve, notwithſtanding his Mercy may interpoſe for a Time, to puniſh ſuch Workers of Iniquity?

The Law againſt Blaſphemy was very ſtrict under the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy*; where you may ſee, that whoſoever "blaſphemed the "Name of the Lord ſhould be put to Death." And though the Laws in this Nation are not indeed ſo ſevere, yet they might be ſufficient to check this abominable Sin, were thoſe that abhor the Practice ſo zealous as they ought for the Honour and Glory of their God. It is greatly to be wiſhed indeed, that Men would be perſuaded to leave this ſhameful Cuſtom, without being obliged to the Puniſhments the Law inflicts for their Reformation; becauſe it would be much more commendable to reform an evil Practice, out of a due Senſe of its Guilt, than merely out of Fear, and Regard to Puniſhment: And to this End, it may be conducive to conſider the great Indecency and Unprofitableneſs of this Sin. It is, in the common Apprehenſions of Men, a very unbecoming Practice, to ſhew any Diſreſpect to our Equals, and much more to our Superiors; infinitely more then, ſurely, to the moſt ſupreme Being, our God: It is likewiſe thought an Inſtance of the greateſt Indiſcretion, to offend and provoke thoſe, whoſe Power may afflict and bring us into Diſtreſs: And if this be agreeable to the common Sentiments of Mankind, he muſt needs be thought very imprudent, and wholly inexcuſable, who will affront his great Creator and Preſerver, even without Pleaſure, and without Profit: For what one Appetite is there that really de-

* Lev. xxiv. 16.

ſires

ſires the Satisfaction of Swearing? What Luſt that covets to profane the Name of God? What an indelible Reproach then muſt it be to us, who are ambitious of nothing more than to be eſteemed rational and wiſe, to hazard our moſt valuable Intereſts for nought? The Uſurer can ſhew large Bags that he has gained by his Sin; and, as he thinks, can juſtly boaſt that he has not been a Slave in vain: The Oppreſſor can view his ſpacious Houſes, and extenſive Lands, and can number the large Revenues of his Tranſgreſſions: But alas! the profane Swearer has nothing at all to ſhew, or boaſt of; unleſs it be a guilty Conſcience to terrify and accuſe him: So impertinent is this Sin, ſo unprofitable, that it has no Fruit or Recompence, unleſs what conſiſts in Shame and Death! And ſhould we not then greatly bewail the Condition of thoſe, who thus, without Reaſon, without Pleaſure, and without Profit, but with the greateſt Guilt and Danger, go on ſtill to blaſpheme God, and provoke his Judgments? And therefore whenever you mention the tremendous Name of your God, I moſt earneſtly beſeech you to do it with the greateſt Reſpect and Reverence: For if you have any real Regard to your everlaſting Welfare, you ought not by any Means to affront Him, upon whom it entirely depends. I truſt therefore, that it will never hereafter be juſtly laid to your Charge, that you either profane, or take that holy Name in vain, whoſe Memorial has been bleſſed in

all Ages; but that it will be your great and chief Concern to ſanctify the Lord God in your Hearts, and inſtead of blaſpheming, to praiſe his holy Name; which that you may all do, both now and for ever, is the hearty Prayer of

Your moſt affectionate Friend, &c.

V. *A Serious Exhortation to the Great Duty of* FAMILY PRAYER,

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

AS many of you as are Maſters of Families, you ought very ſeriouſly to conſider your Duty in Regard to that Relation you bear to the ſeveral Members of them: For as every Family is a ſmall Society, united together in the ſtricteſt Bands of Unity; ſo each of you, as Maſter of his own, muſt look upon himſelf as anſwerable for the Defects that ſhall be found in it: And therefore, upon a religious Account, you muſt think yourſelves concerned, not only to take Care that your whole Family be ordered agreeably to your moſt holy Profeſſion; but alſo, that every particular Member of it be obliged to the conſtant Performance of his Duty to God: And to this End, let me exhort you to let no Opportunity ſlip of bringing your whole Family, or at leaſt as many of them as can conveniently be ſpared, to worſhip the Lord your God in the public Congregation. And this you ſhould not

ot only do every Lord's Day, but even hen at other Times there ſhall be Prayers n your Pariſh Church, you ſhould ſo order our Affairs as to be there yourſelves, or therwiſe enjoin one at leaſt, if not more, of our reſpective Families, in their ſeveral Turns, to be there; that by that Means the ublic Devotion of one Member, may happily ring down a Bleſſing upon the laborious En-eavours of the reſt: But beſides this you muſt ake eſpecial Care, that Morning and Evening Prayer be conſtantly uſed in your Families.

The great Advantages that will attend this oly Practice, are altogether ſufficient to re-ommend its Performance: For if you believe hat God is infinite in Power, that it is He hat* "killeth and maketh alive; that bringeth "down to the Grave and raiſeth up; againſt "whom † there is no Wiſdom, nor Counſel, nor "Underſtanding:" For, as the wiſe Man ‡ peaks, "even the Hearts of Kings are in his "Hand, as Rivers of Water, and he turns "them which Way ſoever he pleaſeth." You muſt apprehend from hence, that he cannot want Ability to anſwer your Petitions; ſo that if there remains any Scruple, it muſt relate to his Will; but even of this you have not ſo much as the leaſt Reaſon to doubt, be-cauſe you have his Veracity and Truth engaged to you for his Readineſs to do you Good; and if you aſk as you ought, you ſhall receive: For "all Things whatſoever ye aſk in

* 1 Sam. ii. 6. † Prov. xxi. 30.
‡ Ibid. Ver. 1.

"Prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive*:" And agreeably to theſe moſt gracious Promiſes, you have many Inſtances of the great Regard God has been pleaſed to vouchſafe to the Petitions of his faithful Servants, even in Things ſuperior to Nature; and therefore, could not be ſuppoſed to proceed from any other but God himſelf: Thus when *Elias* † "prayed earneſtly that it might not rain, it rained not upon "the Earth for the Space of three Years and "ſix Months;" but upon his aſking the contrary, "the Heavens gave Rain, and the Earth "brought forth her Fruit."

Prayer, in general, is of ſuch vaſt Advantage to the Sons of Men, that it is the Fountain of all the Good they enjoy; and, as one of the Ancients obſerves, the very End and Complement of all Bleſſings; it opens the Treaſury of Heavenly Favours, that makes Way for them to deſcend upon us Mortals here below; and can any Duty be more advantageous? Nay, ſhall we not, upon our Neglect of it, be utterly inexcuſable; Eſpecially ſince our God, in his infinite Goodneſs, has made our aſking an ‡ indiſpenſible Condition of obtaining his Bleſſing; ſo that you will find no Duty required in the whole Scripture, to which you are more cloſely and earneſtly preſſed, and in which you are more ſenſibly encouraged, than this of Prayer: And indeed, if we conſider this Duty in regard to ourſelves, and our Well-being, we cannot but eſteem it the greateſt Advantage, as well as the greateſt

* Matt. xxi. 22. † James v. 17.
‡ Matt. vii. 7.

Honour

Honour to be thus admitted with free Access to the Throne of Grace.

And becauſe you will moſt certainly find this Duty, when ſincerely performed, productive of the moſt ſolid Joy and Satisfaction, inaſmuch as you will find it adds Wings as it were to the Soul; by Means of which, ſhe will eaſily mount into Heaven itſelf, the holy City of her God; and happily meet there with the moſt raviſhing Pleaſures and Tranſports of Delight: For this Reaſon, I moſt earneſtly beſeech you to be very diligent and careful in this Duty.

But farther: As you may have many Concerns to manage in this World, for the comfortable Support of the reſpective Families you are Maſters of; ſo you cannot poſſibly take any more effectual Method to bring down the Bleſſing of Heaven upon your honeſt Endeavours than by conſtantly calling your Families together every Morning and Evening, to this important Duty of Prayer; for God alone being the ſovereign * Diſpoſer of all Things in Heaven and Earth, how can you with any Reaſon look for the happy Influence of his good Providence upon your Labours, whilſt you paſs him by unregarded, and never implore his Bleſſing upon the Work of your Hands? Nay, how can you, in your ſober Thoughts, expect that you ſhould be "bleſſed "in the Fruit of your † Body, and in the Fruit "of your Ground; in the Fruit of your Cattle, "the Increaſe of your Kine, and the Flocks of "your Sheep;" when you manifeſtly neglect to

* Pſalm ciii. 19. † Deut. xxviii. 4.

make Application, as you ought, to Heaven for it? and thereby provoke God to send upon you "Curſing, Vexation, and Rebuke, * in all "that you ſet your Hand unto; becauſe of the "Wickedneſs of your Doings, whereby you "have forſaken him."

And ſince it is moſt evident from holy Scripture, that God is the Fountain of our Well-being †, as well as Being itſelf; that it is to Him we owe our ‡ Lives, and the Preſervation of them; that it is from Him comes "every good and perfect Gift §;" that it is He alone who is the Giver of all thoſe Bleſſings, which we either do or can enjoy; how inconceivably miſerable muſt we apprehend that Man's State, who by an apparent Neglect of this great Duty of Prayer, does, as much as in him lies, withdraw his Dependence upon Heaven, and refuſes the moſt gracious Offers of thoſe manifold Bleſſings which are in God's Power alone to beſtow? All Temporal and Spiritual Mercies are entirely in his Hand; and can you with any juſt Reaſon expect what you will not ſo much as pray for? Nay, will not your Neglect of praying for them be looked upon as a tacit Refuſal of them? Since God, as has been already obſerved, has made your aſking in Prayer, an indiſpenſible Condition of receiving: And can you poſſibly deſire a Condition that is eaſier? Nay, is it not next to impoſſible but you muſt embrace it, eſpecially when you duly conſider the terrible

* Deut. xxviii. 20. † Ver. 17.
‡ Acts xvii. 28. § James i. 17.

Threat

Threats and Denunciations of God's Fury againſt thoſe that will not call upon his Name; together with the moſt deſirable Happineſs of thoſe, who by a conſtant, diligent, and pious Application to Him in Prayer, have prevailed with him to proſper their Endeavours, and to guide and direct them in all their Ways.

But there is yet another Conſideration of great Weight, to perſuade to the conſtant Diſcharge of this Duty; and that is, what will be the fatal Conſequence of the Neglect of it, when you come to anſwer in another World, for all the Omiſſions of your Duty in this: The Terrors that will then ſeize upon you will be ſo very great, that you will moſt paſſionately wiſh, when, alas! it is too late, that you had been zealous and careful in your Duty. Then you will find, that no Excuſes of any frivolous Nature will avail you; when the ſeveral Members of your Families will all unanimouſly teſtify your Neglect, and bring you into unavoidable Condemnation. Let this Conſideration therefore have its due Effect upon your Hearts whilſt it may be ſerviceable to you, by bringing you to a due Senſe, and, as the happy Conſequence of that, to a conſtant Practice of this Duty; and by that Means enable you all to anſwer for your ſeveral Charges here with Joy, and not with Grief. And that there may be nothing wanting for your Encouragement in this bleſſed Work, you will find a Method of Morning and Evening Prayer added to this Exhortation; which, in caſe you ſhould not be

otherwiſe better provided, I moſt earneſtly beſeech you conſtantly to make Uſe of in your Families, and that out of a due Regard to the Favour and Bleſſing of God here, and the Happineſs of your immortal Souls hereafter; which, that you may happily obtain, is the fervent Petition of,

Your affectionate Friend, &c.

N. B. The following Prayers may, with a very little Alteration, be as proper for private Perſons to make uſe of in their Cloſets as for Families.

A Method of MORNING *and* EVENING PRAYER, *for the Uſe of Families.*

As ſoon as the Family can conveniently be called together in the Morning, let the Maſter, or ſome one that he ſhall appoint, read the Pſalms for the Day, and after that a Chapter out of the *New Teſtament*, beginning with St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, till you come to the End of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*.

After which, let the Maſter of the Family, or ſome other, go to Prayers in the following Manner, all devoutly kneeling upon their Knees.

Let all preſent ſay,

O God the Father of Heaven, have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners.

O God

O God the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners.

O Holy, Bleſſed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Perſons and One God, have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners.

ALmighty and moſt merciful Father, we have erred and ſtrayed from thy Ways like loſt Sheep; we have followed too much the Devices and Deſires of our own Hearts; we have offended againſt thy holy Laws; we have left undone thoſe Things which we ought to have done; and we have done thoſe Things which we ought not to have done; and there is no Health in us. But thou, O Lord, have Mercy upon us, miſerable Offenders: Spare thou them, O God, which confeſs their Faults. Reſtore thou them that are penitent, according to thy Promiſes declared unto Mankind in Chriſt Jeſu our Lord: And grant, O moſt merciful Father, for his Sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and ſober Life, to the Glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

Then let the Maſter of the Family ſay alone,

ALmighty God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who deſireth not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould turn from his Wickedneſs and live; we beſeech Thee to grant us true Repentance, and thy Holy Spirit, that thoſe Things may pleaſe Thee which we do at this preſent, and that the reſt of our Life hereafter may be pure and holy;

holy; ſo that at the laſt we may come to thy eternal Joy, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Moſt gracious God, we moſt humbly acknowledge, that it is of thy infinite Mercy alone that we have not long ſince been cut off in the Midſt of our manifold and great Sins; but are ſtill, by the Abundance of thy Mercy, preſerved to adore thy Goodneſs, to confeſs our own Unworthineſs, and to implore thy Pardon and Forgiveneſs. Grant us, we beſeech Thee, merciful Lord, ſuch a due Senſe of thy Patience and Long-ſuffering towards us, as may lead us effectually to Repentance; and vouchſafe us the Aſſiſtance of thy heavenly Grace, ſo ſeriouſly to conſider the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of our Lives, that we may make Haſte, and not delay the Time, to keep thy Commandments. And ſince Thou haſt been graciouſly pleaſed to bring us ſafe to the Beginning of this Day, defend us in the ſame by thy mighty Power; and grant that this Day we fall into no Sin, neither run into any Kind of Danger: but that all our Doings may be ordered by thy Governance, to do always that is righteous in thy Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

MORE particularly, we beſeech Thee to bleſs us this Day in the Buſineſs to which thy Providence hath called us; proſper us in our lawful Endeavours, and grant us ſo to behave ourſelves therein, ☞ that we do not any Way offend thy Divine Majeſty, nor bring upon ourſelves the Terrors of an evil Conſcience.—Let all our Thoughts, Words and Deeds, be innocent, uſeful, and profitable, as becomes the Servants of Chriſt; that ſo when we depart this Life we may reſt in Hope, and finally be inſtated in the Joys and Glories of a bleſſed and happy Immortality, through the Merits and Mediation of thy dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord: For whoſe Sake accept, O God, we humbly pray Thee, our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer unto thy divine Majeſty for the whole Race of Mankind: Bleſs thy holy Catholic Church, and grant that all thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, may agree in the Truth of thy holy Word, and live in Unity and Godly Love; but in a more particular Manner, let the choiceſt of thy Bleſſings deſcend upon that Part of thy Church of which we ourſelves

On Sunday.

MORE particularly, we beſeech Thee to bleſs us in the due Obſervation of that holy Reſt which Thou haſt ordained; that with meek Hearts and due Reverence we may hear and receive thy holy Word, and bring forth ſuch Fruits as are meet for Repentance; and grant us ſo to behave ourſelves this Day, *&c.* ☞

ſelves are Members; heal its Breaches; enlarge its Borders; and unite its Diviſions. Bleſs all Chriſtian Kings, Princes and Governors, particularly our Sovereign Lord the King, and all the Royal Family. Bleſs, O Lord, the Biſhops and Paſtors of this thy Church; particularly him with whom Thou haſt intruſted the Care of our Souls; Enable them faithfully to inſtruct thy People committed to their Charge; to preſerve them from all dangerous Errors; and to lead them in the right Way, that leadeth unto Life everlaſting. Comfort, O Lord, we humbly pray Thee, all thoſe that are in Affliction; heal the Sick, ſupport the Weak, relieve the Needy, and defend the Oppreſſed: Be the Father of the Fatherleſs, and plead Thou the Cauſe of the Widows. Be in a very particular Manner gracious to our Relations, Friends, and Benefactors; return all the Good they have done us manifold into their Boſoms, and grant them, we beſeech Thee, O Lord, whatſoever Thou knoweſt needful or expedient for them. And whilſt we thus pray for others, give us, O merciful God, a Portion in all thoſe good Prayers that are any where offered unto Thee on our Behalf; and make both them and us happy and joyful Partakers of the Interceſſion of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Finally, with theſe our Supplications and Prayers, we beſeech Thee to accept our Morning Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, for all thy Goodneſs, and Loving-kindneſs to us

nd to all Men; for our Health, Strength, ood and Raiment; for the Comforts as well s Neceſſaries of this Life. But above all, e laud and magnify thy great and glorious Name, for thy unſpeakable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for the Means of Grace we enjoy, nd for the Hopes of Glory hereafter: And e moſt humbly beſeech Thee to give us that ue Senſe of all thy Mercies, that our Hearts ay be unfeignedly thankful, and that we ay always ſhew forth thy Praiſe, not only with our Lips but in our Lives, by giving up urſelves to thy Service, and by walking before Thee in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all he Days of our Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; in whoſe moſt bleſſed Name and Words e conclude theſe our imperfect Prayers, ſaying, as he himſelf hath taught us:

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread; nd forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive hem that treſpaſs againſt us: And lead us not nto Temptation; but deliver us from Evil: or thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and he Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Fellowhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

EVENING

Evening Prayer.

The Pſalms for the Evening Service of the Day, being read, let a Chapter be read out of the Epiſtles, beginning at St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Romans*; after which, kneeling down, go to Prayers as follows.

Let all preſent ſay,

TO the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgiveneſſes, though we have rebelled againſt him; neither have we obeyed the Voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the Laws which He hath ſet before us. But, O moſt gracious God, remember not our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers, neither take Thou Vengeance of our Sins; ſpare us, good Lord, ſpare thy People, whom thou haſt redeemed by thy moſt precious Blood, and be not angry with us for ever. *Spare us, good Lord.*

Evening Prayer.

ALmighty God, Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Maker of all Things, Judge of all Men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedneſs, which we from Time to Time moſt grievouſly have committed by Thought, Word, and Deed, againſt thy Divine Majeſty, provoking moſt juſtly thy Wrath and Indignation againſt us; we do earneſtly repent, and are heartily ſorry for these our Miſdoings; the Remembrance of them is grievous

grievous unto us; the Burden of them is intolerable. Have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon us, moſt merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, forgive us all that is paſt, and grant that we may ever hereafter ſerve and pleaſe Thee in Newneſs of Life, to the Honour and Glory of thy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Let the Maſter of the Family alone, ſay,

O Moſt merciful and gracious Lord God, who dwelleſt in the higheſt Heavens, yet humbleſt thyſelf to behold the Things which are done here upon Earth; Thou chargeſt thy Angels with Folly, yea, the Heavens are not clean in thy Sight; and what then is Man, that he ſhould be clean? or he that is born of a Woman, that he ſhould be righteous? O Lord, to us belongeth Shame and Confuſion of Face, becauſe we have rebelled againſt Thee; but with Thee there is Mercy, therefore ſhalt thou be feared. Give us therefore, gracious Lord, a deep Senſe of our Sins paſt, and a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for them; and ſo endue us with the Grace of thy holy Spirit, that for what remains of our Lives, we may walk more circumſpectly before Thee, redeeming the Time, becauſe the Days are evil: And to this End, purify our Souls from all corrupt Deſires and Affections; mortify all our carnal Luſts, and Appetites, and make us as conſtant and zealous to deny, as we have been heretofore ready to gratify and indulge them: Raiſe up a

Spirit

Spirit of Piety and Devotion, of Love and Charity, of Humility and Self-denial, within us; and grant theſe, and all other Chriſtian Graces and Virtues, may increaſe and abound in us. Remove from us all Envy, and Hatred, and Malice, and whatſoever elſe is contrary to our Duty towards Thee, or towards our Neighbour. Charge thy holy Providence, O Lord, we humbly pray Thee, with us this Night, and by thy great Mercy defend us from all the Perils and Dangers of it: Keep us both outwardly in our Bodies and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all Adverſities which may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts which may aſſault and hurt the Soul. Extend thy Goodneſs, O Lord, to the whole Race of Mankind; have Mercy upon all *Jews*, *Turks*, Infidels, Hereticks, and Schiſmaticks; take from them all Ignorance, Hardneſs of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word; and ſo fetch them Home to thy Flock, that they may be ſaved among the Remnant of the true *Iſraelites*. Grant unto all them that are admitted into the Fellowſhip of Chriſt's Religion, that they may avoid thoſe Things that are contrary to their moſt holy Profeſſion, and follow all ſuch Things as are agreeable to the ſame. Let thy continual Pity cleanſe and defend thy Church, and becauſe it cannot continue in Safety, without thy Succour, preſerve it evermore by thy Help and Goodneſs. Bleſs all our Governors, both in Church and State; that in their ſeveral Stations they may be uſeful and ſervice-

able

ble to thy Glory and the public Good. We lso make our humble Supplication to Thee r all our Benefactors, Friends and Relations, nd alſo for our very Enemies; let thy fatherly land be ever over them, let thy holy Spirit e ever with them, and ſo lead them in the nowledge and Obedience of thy Word, that the End they may obtain everlaſting Life. ook down with an Eye of Pity and Com-aſſion upon all thoſe that are any Way af-icted or diſtreſſed, in Mind, Body, or Eſtate: ive them Patience and Comfort under all eir Sufferings, and in thy due Time a happy ſſue out of all their Afflictions. Finally, O ord, we deſire to bleſs and praiſe thy holy ame, for all thy Goodneſs and Loving-indneſs to us and to all Men: We give hee hearty Thanks for thy Preſervation of s this Day paſt, and the reſt of our Lives, om innumerable Accidents and Dangers, that ight have otherwiſe befallen us: But above ll, we laud and magnify, and adore thy oodneſs, in the Redemption of the World y the Death and Paſſion of our Saviour hriſt, both God and Man; who did humble imſelf even to the Death of the Croſs, for s miſerable Sinners, who lay in Darkneſs nd the Shadow of Death, that He might ake us the Children of God, and exalt us o everlaſting Life: Teach us therefore, gra-ious God, ſo to expreſs our Thankfulneſs, hat ſubmitting ourſelves entirely to his holy Will and Pleaſure, we may ſtudy to ſerve Him in true Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all he Days of our Life.

And now, O Lord, that we are about to lie down upon our Beds of Reſt, grant us ſeriouſly to conſider the Time when we ſhall lie down in the Duſt. And ſince we know neither the Day nor the Hour of our Maſter's coming, make us ſo careful of our Duty, and ſo watchful againſt Sin, that we may be always ready; that we may never lie in ſuch a State as we ſhould fear to die in: But that whether we live, we may live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we may die unto the Lord; that whether we live or die, we may be thine through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; in whoſe moſt holy Name, and moſt prevailing Words, we farther call upon Thee, ſaying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread, and forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us: And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us, defend and guide, ſanctify and ſave us, and all our Friends and Relations, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

5.

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE

POOR,

SHEWING

GOD's Goodneſs and Love to them; and how much it is their DUTY and INTEREST to ſerve and pleaſe him.

Intended not only as a Means to promote the true Benefit and Comfort of the Poor in general; but alſo to remind thoſe of their Duty, who have it in their Power *to do Good.*

By T. GREEN, M.A.
Vicar of WYMESWOULD, LEICESTERSHIRE.

THE TENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON, BOOKSELLERS TO THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

M.DCC.XCVII.

[Price 4d. ſtitcht, or 28s. a Hundred.]



PREFACE;

OR,

ADDRESS TO THE POOR.

BEING desired to distribute a *Legacy* of One Hundred * Pounds amongst the Poor of my Parish, I took that favourable opportunity of calling them together, in order to impart to them some proper Instructions; which as they were well received, I have made public (with some additions) for their constant use, and also for the service and comfort of the *Poor in general*; hoping that this Treatise may come into the hands of several of them by the kind assistance of those, who perform the duty of Christian Charity in its full extent, or are concerned for the welfare of the souls, as well as bodies of the *Poor*; amongst whom will be found many, whose spiritual wants

* Left by *W. Okeover*, Esq; lately deceased.

are

are as great as their bodily neceſſities; and more particularly amongſt ſuch of them as *forget to aſſemble themſelves together* for public Worſhip; which neglect makes this kind of application more neceſſary. Others, though not reduced to Poverty, may receive ſome advantage from the Directions here offered; and many of the Obſervations from Scripture, which declare God's *Goodneſs* to the Poor, do alſo remind thoſe of their duty who have it in their Power *to do good.*

As this will be a proper preſent to all Poor Families, (and very ſuitable to be given along with other Charities) ſo will it be of uſe to all Hoſpitals, Infirmaries, and Workhouſes; and more particularly to all *Charity Schools*, in order to inſtil a due ſenſe of duty into the mind of the riſing generation, and thereby prevent vicious habits; which when once contracted, are not moved without great difficulty.—So that the ſureſt way of advancing the cauſe of virtue and religion, muſt be by carefully *inſtructing* thoſe who are young; or *training them up in the way they ſhould go.*

At a time when Religion is too much neglected by many, amongſt *all* degrees of men, I ſhould be glad if my weak en-

leavours might be of any ſervice in pro-
noting it amongſt the lower rank of
ny Chriſtian Brethren, and thereby ad-
ancing their eternal well-being.

The deſign of the enſuing diſcourſe is
o keep your minds from being too much
epreſſed by your preſent low condition,
o as to forget God's Goodneſs and Love
o you, and the great privileges you
re intitled to by the Goſpel; to put you
n mind of the dignity of your nature;
hat your Souls were created in the image
nd ſimilitude of God; and that he hath
romiſed to *crown* you, as well as others,
ith *eternal glory and honour*, if ye are
areful to ſerve and pleaſe him. And I
ope the advice here given may be found
o be *a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary*,
ſa. l. 4. or tend to promote your preſent
eace and conſolation; which can be
ounded on nothing elſe but a true belief
f the Goſpel, and a ſuitable practice.
nd though the Lord give you for a
hort time *the bread of adverſity, and*
ater of affliction, Iſa. xxx. 20. yet the
roſpect and well-grounded hopes of an
verlaſting *Inheritance* in Heaven will
ake your paſſage through this world
uch more tolerable and eaſy, than

otherwiſe it would be. As I have mentioned ſeveral things for your comfort and encouragement, ſo neither have I omitted to put you in mind of the neceſſity of doing your duty; giving you a caution againſt ſome ſins your condition makes you more liable to. I have endeavoured to expreſs myſelf in a plain manner, to make the advice more uſeful; and quoted ſeveral paſſages from Scripture ſuitable to the ſubject; that you may be the more ſenſible how greatly the Word of God tends to your comfort; and be invited thereby to be diligent in acquainting yourſelves with it.

PSAL

PSALM lxviii. 10.

Thou, O GOD, *haſt prepared of thy goodneſs for the Poor.*

GOD's *Goodneſs* to the children of men is abundantly evident from the general and conſtant experience which they have of it: to this are owing all the bleſſings they enjoy, and it is this perfection which renders God the object of our love, our praiſe, and adoration. The holy Scriptures have declared this important truth to us in the cleareſt terms; "The earth (we are aſſured) is full of the goodneſs of the Lord," *Pſal.* xxxiii. 5. He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, *Pſal.* cxlv. 9. "His goodneſs endureth continually," *Pſal.* lii. 1. "He daily loadeth us with his benefits," *Pſ.* lxviii. 19.—"God is love," ſays St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. iv. 8.—"To do good," which is the neceſſary conſequence of love, muſt therefore be eſſential to his nature; and as there can be no defect in the ſupreme Being, our reaſon will inform us, that God muſt be poſſeſſed of this valuable excellency in the higheſt degree, or be infinite in goodneſs. He created the world, not ſo much to diſplay his power, as to manifeſt his goodneſs; the communicating happineſs to his creatures, ſeems to have been the moving cauſe of this great work; ſo that

they were all originally deſigned to partake of his divine goodneſs, though in different degrees. And the author of the book of Wiſdom argues very juſtly, when he ſays,—"Thou, O Lord, loveſt all things that are, and abhorreſt nothing that thou haſt made; for never wouldſt thou have made any thing if thou hadſt hated it," *chap.* xi. 24.

Nay, God is kind to "the unthankful and to the evil," *Luke* vi. 35. he maketh "his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good," *Matt.* v. 45. ſo that the wicked, who are his enemies, do yet partake in many inſtances of the overflowings of his bounty.—But my deſign leads me to ſpeak more particularly of his loving-kindneſs to the Poor.—"He hath prepared of his goodneſs for the Poor;" which words, tho' they relate to the extraordinary care which God took of the *Iſraelites*, when they travelled through the barren wilderneſs, may nevertheleſs be underſtood in a general ſenſe, and be applied to the caſe of the *Poor* at all times. And as ſome of them, by reaſon of their diſtreſſed condition, may perhaps call in queſtion GOD'S general goodneſs; and by this means become uneaſy in their minds, or leſs careful in their duty, and be led to murmur and repine, as thinking themſelves overlooked by divine providence; I ſhall in my following diſcourſe,

Firſt, Shew the certainty of *God's Goodneſs* to the *Poor*, as it relates both to this life and the next, and offer ſome Arguments for their preſent comfort.

Secondly, Obſerve how much it is their *Duty* and *Intereſt* to ſerve and pleaſe GOD; and how dangerous a thing it will be to be guilty of a neglect in this great affair.

I. FIRST then, concerning GOD's *goodneſs*, or love to the *Poor* in this life. As an evident manifeſtation of this truth, I ſhall mention a few of the many expreſs declarations in Scripture to this purpoſe; we find that GOD hath *there* ſtrictly enjoined the duty of *Charity* (or *doing good*) upon all, who have it in their power, and enforced it by many inviting promiſes, and ſevere threatenings.

As, "the Poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the land, therefore I command thee, ſaith the Lord, that thou ſhalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land; thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thy heart ſhall not be grieved," *Deut.* xv. 7, *&c. Lev.* xxv. 35, *&c.* "Withhold not good, ſays King *Solomon*, from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it," *Prov.* iii. 27. Hence we ſee, that *doing good* is not a matter of indifferency, or a pure act of generoſity, which perſons may chooſe whether they will perform or no;—but by the law of GOD it is made a debt, which thoſe who are able muſt carefully diſcharge; and they are to look out for proper objects to whom it is moſt *due*, —ſo that a wilful neglect of this duty becomes a piece of injuſtice; and the rich are upon this account to be conſidered as GOD's *ſtew-*

ards, and the more they are entruſted with, the more they have to be accountable for.

Charity, or a due regard for the *Poor*, is made a neceſſary and eſſential duty of the Goſpel. "Charge them that are rich in this world (ſays St. *Paul*) that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come," 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices GOD is well pleaſed," *Heb.* xiii. 16. And this duty is made the proper trial of our love of GOD,—"Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of GOD in him," 1 *John* iii. 17. But there is no argument of ſo great weight to enforce this duty, and let the *Poor* ſee how great a regard GOD has for them, as ſeriouſly to conſider, that our Saviour hath made the Poor his *repreſentatives*; or acknowledges what is given to them, as given to himſelf.—"I was an hungred, ſays he to the charitable, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me:" declaring, that "inaſmuch as they had done it unto one of the leaſt of his brethren in diſtreſs, they had done it to himſelf," *Matt.* xxv. 35, *&c.* And that the condition of the *Poor* might not be careleſly overlooked, he encourages perſons to acts of *charity* with the promiſes of *eternal life*; but denounces everlaſting puniſhment againſt the uncharitable.

2. GOD's *goodneſs* to the Poor evidently appears, by the promiſe of ſeveral temporal bleſſings to thoſe that *do good*. "He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again," *Prov.* xix. 17. GOD is pleaſed to declare, that he ſtands accountable for that which is beſtowed upon the Poor; ſo that perſons by this means make, as it were, GOD himſelf their debtor; they lend their money to the greateſt advantage, and higheſt intereſt; as they have the promiſes of *this life*, beſides a full aſſurance of being rewarded with eternal *good things* in heaven. GOD hath promiſed to bleſs the charitable in "all their works, and in all they put their hand unto," *Deut.* xv. 10. "The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat," *Prov.* xi. 25. "He that giveth unto the poor ſhall not lack," *Prov.* xxviii. 27. "Give, ſays our Saviour, and it ſhall be given unto you," *Luke* vi. 38. Riches are repreſented by King *Solomon*, as making themſelves *wings*, and *flying away* from the poſſeſſors of them, *Prov.* xxiii. 5. now by works of charity they may obtain of GOD what we may properly call a *heavenly inſurance*; it is the beſt way they can take to ſecure the poſſeſſion for themſelves, and perpetuate it to their *poſterity*. King *David* had never met with an inſtance where "the righteous was forſaken, or his ſeed begging their bread; he is ever merciful and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed," *Pſal.* xxxvii. 25, 26. By the *righteous*, in this and many

other places of Scripture, is particularly meant the *charitable* and *merciful.*

Many other bleſſings are promiſed, in order to invite perſons to *do good*; as health and *proſperity* to ſuch as "deal their bread to the hungry, cover the naked with a garment, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul," *Iſa.* lviii. 7, &c. "Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble, comfort him upon the bed of languiſhing, and make all his bed in his ſickneſs," *Pſal.* xli. 1, &c. thus will he find ſupport when he has the moſt occaſion for it; and the "bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh ſhall come upon him," *Job* xxix. 13.

From what has been obſerved, we ſee, that GOD has committed the *Poor* to the care of thoſe who have more plenty of worldly good things. And if at any time they ſuffer great hardſhips by reaſon of their poverty, this is not to be imputed to want of *goodneſs* in GOD (who has provided enough to ſatisfy the *deſire of every living thing:*) but the complaint lies againſt his *ſtewards*, who wrongfully withhold what is due to others; or forget to *communicate* out of their abundance to thoſe, whom providence has charged upon them.

3. GOD has manifeſted his goodneſs, or love to the Poor, by the many gracious promiſes which he has expreſsly made to them in his holy word; and by the ſeveral benefits they receive at his hands.

The Scripture repreſents GOD as the "deliverer of the poor and needy, and him that

hath no helper," *Pſal.* lxxii. 12. a "ſtrength to them in their diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat," *Iſa.* xxv. 4. "as a Father of the Fatherleſs," *Pſal.* lxviii. 5. "a comforter of thoſe that are caſt down," 2 *Cor.* vii. 6.—as "caring for the poor and needy," *Pſal.* xl. 17. "hearing their deſire," *Pſal.* x. 17. and "ſtanding at their right hand to ſave them," *Pſal.* cix. 31. "filling the hungry ſoul with goodneſs," *Pſal.* cvii. 9. and "ſatisfying the poor with bread," *Pſal.* cxxxii. 15. And the better to preſerve the Poor from contempt and violence, we are told, "that he who oppreſſeth and mocketh the poor, reproaches his maker," *Prov.* xiv. 31. xvii. 5. or affronts GOD, who hath promiſed to take the Poor under his divine protection. And their complaints under oppreſſion ſhall "enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth," *James* v. 4.—he will hear their cry, and *will help them*; and has threatened to viſit with his judgments thoſe, who "oppreſs the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherleſs," *Mal.* iii. 5. Theſe, and many other paſſages of the like nature, may give ſufficient aſſurance to the Poor, that GOD is their powerful friend and *protector*, their kind benefactor and gracious father.

They partake alſo of many real bleſſings in common with others: as GOD of his goodneſs created all things, ſo does he ſtill uphold, or preſerve them, by "the word of his power," *Heb.* i. 3. in him "we all live, and move, and have our being," *Acts* xvii. 28. It

is he who giveth rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, thereby filling our hearts with food and gladneſs," *Acts* xiv. 17. "and crowneth the year with his goodneſs," *Pſal.* lxv. 11.—of his *bounty*, in theſe reſpects, the *Poor* are partakers as well as others. Thus then your *creation*, *preſervation*, and neceſſary ſupplies of your lives, are owing to the *goodneſs of the Lord*; and though you have not *plenty* of all things to enjoy, yet, through the divine love, you have generally "food to eat, and raiment to put on;" and there are none in ſo low and miſerable a condition, but have reaſon to look upon GOD as their benefactor, for ſeveral good things they conſtantly receive at his hands, and for preſerving them from various dangers and calamities.

4. GOD hath ſhewed his *goodneſs* to the Poor, not only by his poſitive commands in Scripture, but alſo by forming human nature in ſuch a manner, as to diſpoſe it to contribute to their relief. *Benevolence* and *compaſſion* ſeem evidently the natural offſpring of the human mind, whereby it is inclined to have regard to, and in ſome meaſure feel, what happens to the afflicted; taking a ſecret ſatisfaction in leſſening their misfortunes, and contributing to their happineſs. And this virtue will ſhine forth in the ſoul, unleſs it be blinded by ſelf-intereſt, ſunk by groſs indolence, or corrupted by vicious habits. The pleaſure which naturally attends *doing good*, was providentially deſigned to excite perſons to it; and there can ſcarce be any greater delight to a reaſonable

mind, than (as a pious author expreſſes * it) "To enter into a family as an angel of peace, "and to leave thoſe in acts of praiſe and thank-"fulneſs, whom we found plunged in mourn-"ing and deſolation."

The charitable muſt be conſidered as inſtruments in GOD's hand, for diſpenſing his favours and bounty to the *Poor*: "He work-eth in them both to will and to do of his good pleaſure," and diſpoſes them to *good works*: ſo that the Poor have often been relieved by the unexpected bounty of perſons, whom GOD by his divine influence has excited to ſuch charitable actions. And it muſt be acknowledged, in favour of the preſent age, that many are inclined to *do good*, or are *ready to diſtribute to the neceſſity* of their poor diſtreſſed brethren; as is evident, not only by the ſeveral charitable benefactions of a private nature, but alſo by that prevailing diſpoſition of *erecting Charity Schools*, and public *Hoſpitals*; by which means proper care is taken both of the ſouls and bodies of the Poor. This muſt be a comfortable reflection to perſons in diſtreſs, to conſider, that they are not only objects of the divine care, but have alſo the compaſſionate regard and aſſiſtance of man on their ſide; and that there are great numbers, who are both able and willing to relieve them, and make it their ſtudy to find out the moſt proper and effectual ways of doing good. And this employment is not only a neceſſary, but a

* Mr. NELSON, in his *Addreſs to Perſons of Quality and Fortune*, Page 248.

very ornamental part of the Chriſtian life;—they who *do good* to thoſe from whom they *hope for nothing again*, are intitled to the honour of being "children of the higheſt," *Luke* vi. 35.—and *Job* ſhined in no part of his character with more luſtre, than when he is repreſented as "a father to the poor, as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and cauſing the widow's heart to ſing for joy," *chap.* xxix. 12, &c. xxxi. 16, &c.

As a farther comfort to the Poor, we may juſt take notice, that ſuch proviſion is now made for them all by public Authority, that no one amongſt us can periſh for want of neceſſaries, or need be tempted to uſe unlawful means to ſupply their wants; they have the laws of man on their ſide, concurring with the laws of GOD. But this proviſion is not to ſet bounds to our charity; they who are able muſt extend it farther, and bring in their *free-will offerings:* proper objects for the exerciſe of this virtue are numerous, not only public ones, but ſeveral upon enquiry may be found, who *mourn* in private, and are *afflicted*; whom the charitable Chriſtian will make it his buſineſs to find out, and his pleaſure to relieve.

Having now conſidered ſome few of the many ways by which GOD of his *goodneſs* provides for the bodily ſupport of the Poor; I ſhall proceed to mention ſome of the *ſpiritual good things* which belong to them.

1ſt. In regard to your ſouls—They were breathed into you by the ſame Almighty power, that *formed the ſpirits* of the great and

mighty; and are in their own nature as nearly related to GOD, equally valuable, equally immortal. And Jeſus Chriſt, the Captain of our Salvation, who is *no reſpecter of perſons*, hath given himſelf "a ranſom for all," 1 *Tim.* ii. 6. Thus there is no difference betwixt one perſon and another, in their great and chief intereſts. The way to heaven is as free and open to you as to others; and the *manſions* prepared for you there (if you love GOD and keep his commandments) will be equally bright and glorious.

2*dly*, GOD has ſhewed his good-will in a particular manner to you, by declaring, that "he hath choſen the Poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven," *James* ii. 5. And the Poor are expreſsly mentioned, as having "the goſpel preached unto them," *Matt.* xi. 5. as was foretold by the Prophet; "The poor amongſt men ſhall rejoice in the holy One of Iſrael," *Iſa.* xxix. 19. Thus you ſee, that one great deſign of our Saviour's coming into the world, was to declare to the Poor the "glad tidings of Salvation," and make them partakers of the divine favour. "Bleſſed, ſays he, be ye Poor, for yours is the kingdom of GOD," *Luke* vi. 20. And their low and humble condition, particularly diſpoſed them to embrace the goſpel, and become ſubjects of GOD's ſpiritual kingdom.

As it was accounted a great bleſſing to the Poor in our Saviour's time, to have the goſpel preached unto them; I may juſt obſerve,

that this bleſſing, by the *goodneſs* of GOD, is ſtill continued to you in this nation, when the goſpel is preached in truth and purity: And if any have not *the knowledge of God*, it will be *to their ſhame*,—as "all may know the Lord, from the leaſt to the greateſt," *Heb.* viii. 11.

3*dly*, The ſpiritual improvement of the Poor among us, is very much advanced by the great number of *Charity Schools*, piouſly deſigned for imparting *knowledge* to their ſouls; which is freely offered to them, "without money, and without price." By this means, we hope there are in moſt families of the Poor, perſons who can read the holy Scriptures, and other *Treatiſes* publiſhed to promote Virtue and Religion; which, by the kind aſſiſtance of ſeveral charitable and worthy perſons, diſtinguiſhed by the title of *The Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge*, may be purchaſed at a very ſmall expence; thereby to encourage pious Chriſtians to give them away, and relieve the *ſpiritual* wants of their poor brethren. —And Chriſtian charity teaches us to be concerned for their everlaſting happineſs (which as much exceeds their temporal welfare, as eternity does time, to give our aſſiſtance, that they may be "fed with the bread of life;" be "covered with the robe of righteouſneſs; and clothed with the garment of Salvation," *Iſa.* lxi. 10.

4*thly*, It may not be improper here to obſerve, that as by our *Laws* Proviſion is made that the Poor ſhall not periſh through extreme

want, ſo alſo by this method of Charity, they are like to receive much benefit in their religious affairs, by being reſtrained from *wandering* about. This will prevent ſeveral temptations to wickedneſs, which they would meet with in that way of life: They are by this means alſo kept under the inſpection of their proper teachers, and come more frequently to the public worſhip of GOD. This helps to prevent that groſs ignorance in Religion, which too frequently prevails among thoſe, who are brought up from their infancy with the trade of begging (a manner of life which there is now no neceſſity to make a common practice of) by which they become, I fear too often, as ignorant and wicked, as they are poor and naked. So that, as the Plaſmiſt expreſſes it, they are in danger of being "eſtranged from the womb; of going aſtray as ſoon as they are born, and ſpeaking lies," *Pſal.* lviii. 3. They have learned indeed the name of GOD and CHRIST, in order to move compaſſion in thoſe they apply to for relief; but it is to be feared, that many of them know as little of the true nature of the Chriſtian Religion, or our Saviour's deſign in coming into the world, as if they did not live under the *light* of the goſpel. That method then of providing for the Poor, which helps to advance their everlaſting, as well as preſent welfare, muſt be looked upon as a well-deſigned charity, a great happineſs and advantage to them.

I ſhall now proceed to offer ſome farther arguments for the comfort of the Poor under their preſent circumſtances.

Firſt, You muſt conſider that *Poverty and Riches* are no certain marks either of GOD's favour or diſpleaſure; ſo that "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him," *Eccl.* ix. 9. or, GOD's love to the good, and hatred to the evil, are not always viſible and evident by what happens to them in this life. This is plain from the caſe of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, mentioned in the goſpel: the one, though forgetful of his duty, had yet a very large ſhare of the *good things* of this world; the other, though religious, had his *evil things*, or a weight of human miſery, which very few experience in ſo extreme a degree. But this myſtery of Providence is cleared up by the ſudden change which Death immediately made in their reſpective conditions. The poor man is ſet quite free from his pain and poverty, and his ſoul conveyed by Angels into a place of joy and happineſs; while, on the other hand, the rich man finds himſelf confined in a place of torment, where the remembrance of his former enjoyments muſt be an addition to his miſery. The bleſſed change of *Lazarus*'s condition, may be a ſufficient comfort to perſons in a poor and afflicted ſtate, by aſſuring them, that if they go in the paths of Virtue and Religion, they ſhall by no means loſe their reward:—"the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever," *Pſal.* ix. 18. but GOD

will "provide ſome better things" for them, and "comfort them for the years wherein they have ſuffered adverſity." Though they now live in want and obſcurity, little known or regarded, yet the time is ſhortly coming, when it will appear to thoſe who made *no account* of them, that they are "numbered amongſt the children of GOD, and their lot is amongſt the ſaints," *Wiſd.* v. 5.

Secondly, That God has ſuffered his faithful ſervants to be frequently tried by diſtreſs and afflictions in this world, is very evident from many remarkable examples recorded in Scripture; we read of ſeveral righteous perſons, who had trials of "bonds and impriſonments; were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder; who wandered about in deſerts and mountains, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented," *Heb.* xi. 36. What a variety of ſufferings did St. *Paul* undergo! He was frequently, as he tells us, "in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in hunger and thirſt, in cold and nakedneſs." 2 *Cor.* xi. 27. But above all, I ſhould mention the great Captain of our Salvation, our bleſſed *Saviour* himſelf, "who was a man of ſorrow, and acquainted with griefs:" and though the "world was his, and the fulneſs thereof;" yet whilſt on earth "he had not where to lay his head," *Matt.* viii. 20. But to the comfort of all faithful Chriſtians, "he hath overcome the world;" ſo that even under its afflictions they may "have peace," *John* xvi. 33. If they take his eaſy *yoke* upon them, and "learn of him, they ſhall find reſt unto their ſouls,"

Matt. xi. 29. He came to teach mankind in general to be happy, by ſuch a way as every one has in his own power, if he will follow the divine inſtructions of his Maſter. Though perſons are under ſufferings, yet if GOD give them ſtrength to bear them, and afford ſufficient comfort under them, they cannot properly be ſaid to be miſerable. Thus St. *Paul* declares, we are "troubled on every ſide, but not diſtreſſed; perplexed, but not in deſpair," 2 *Cor.* iv. 8."

It does not by any means follow, from the inſtances above mentioned, that it is neceſſary for every good Chriſtian to profeſs *Poverty*, or be in affliction:—but we learn from thence, that perſons in ſuch a condition, are not to look upon themſelves as "forſaken of GOD, or faint in the day of adverſity," *Prov.* xxiv. 10.

If indeed in this life only we had hopes of happineſs, there might then be more room for complaint. But this life is only to be conſidered as a place of trial and probation; a ſchool, to train us up for a future and more perfect ſtate; a nurſery, from which we are to be removed in a ſhort time to everlaſting habitations; a ſtation, where we are juſt built, and fitted up, to be launched into the immenſe ocean of eternity. In whatever condition Providence has placed us, we are to perform our part with care and diligence; and the greater trials or difficulties any perſons undergo, if they *acquit themſelves like men*, and hold faſt their integrity, the more glorious

will be the victory, and the greater their reward. Thus the ſkill of the Pilot is moſt evident in a ſtorm, and the courage of a Soldier in the field of battle. "Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried (or approved by trial) he ſhall receive a crown of life," *James* i. 12. Virtue ſo *approved*, will yield a preſent ſatisfaction, as it has turned the difficulties of this life into ſo many triumphs.

Thirdly, Though God is infinitely good, yet as this life was chiefly deſigned for a ſtate of diſcipline, it does not therefore admit of perfect happineſs: *Corrections*, or ſufferings, may in ſeveral caſes be inſtances of God's love, ſent either to reform the Vices, or prove and advance the Virtues of men; ſo that his real kindneſs to them here ſhews itſelf by ordering things in ſuch a manner, as may beſt conduce to their eternal happineſs hereafter. —Heaven is that *Reſt* and *Inheritance*, which God hath prepared for them that love him; the only place where we are to expect *fulneſs of joy*, and partake of the abſolute *goodneſs* of God in a complete manner.

Perſons, who are travelling to take poſſeſſion of an inheritance, which will afford them a plentiful proviſion for their whole lives, will not be very uneaſy at the indifferent entertainment which they meet with on the road, or the unpleaſantneſs of the country they paſs through, knowing that the preſent inconvenience will ſoon be over: Nor will they for ſome ſhort gratifications in their

journey, make over their title, or forfeit their right to the good things they are in purſuit of; and become as *Eſau*, who "for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright," *Heb.* xii. 16. In like manner we are repreſented in Scripture, as "*ſtrangers*, *pilgrims*, and *ſojourners* on earth; as having no *continuing city* here," but travelling to take poſſeſſion of a "heavenly country, everlaſting habitations." Now the full aſſurance given in GOD's word to all good Chriſtians, of a glorious inheritance in heaven, may make them bear with patience the preſent difficulties which they may meet with on their paſſage thither; and comfort themſelves with the hopes of that infinite amends which will ſoon be made them. By conſidering, that they are not now properly at home, they will learn not to be too anxious about laying up great and laſting ſtores for the ſhort journey of this life, which they can have no occaſion for; nor will they ſet their hearts ſo much upon temporal good things, as to be unmindful of ſecuring eternal enjoyments; and under any preſent evils, or calamities, they will remain "ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in their duty, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as they know, that their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 *Cor.* xv. 58.

Fourthly, This world has not improperly been compared to a *Stage*, or *Theatre**, where mankind have their ſeveral parts allotted

* See *Epictetus*'s Morals, chap. 23.

lotted them by divine Providence: So that it is not the ſtation they are placed in, or the part given them to act, that will gain them the *eſteem* of GOD; but a commendable manner of performing it; or a proper behaviour, and ſuitable conduct in that character they bear, whether it be a *high* or *low* one. As ſoon as death cloſes the ſcene, and "the faſhion of this world is paſſed away," every one will be rewarded according to his reſpective behaviour. Thus we find the poor deſpiſed *Lazarus* (whoſe "departure, in the ſight of the unwiſe might be taken for miſery," *Wiſd.* iii. 2.) by behaving himſelf fitly in the low condition he was placed in, gained the divine approbation, and was immediately advanced to heavenly enjoyments; and being "a little chaſtiſed, he was ſoon greatly rewarded; for GOD proved him, and found him worthy for himſelf," *ver.* 5. Whilſt on the other hand, the rich man, (though perhaps much admired by the common ſpectators, who are ſtruck with outward pomp and ſhew) yet being defective in ſupporting his proper character, fell under everlaſting diſgrace, and was caſt into a place of torment. This repreſentation of life lets us ſee how little reaſon mankind have to value themſelves upon account of riches, or worldly diſtinctions and ſuperiority, which are all to ceaſe in ſo ſhort a time; when the *ſhadow of death* ſhall obſcure the greateſt worldly pomp, and the moſt "powerful become weak as others," *Iſa.* xiv.

10.—" Thus ſaith the Lord, Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me," *Jer.* ix. 23. and in this neceſſary *knowledge*, the *Poor* may glory as much as the *Rich*.

Thus we ſee mankind are equal in the chief things, or in their ſpiritual and eternal intereſts; and that GOD values or diſeſteems them; not as they are *Rich* or *Poor*, but as they are good or evil. The preſent diſtinctions cannot outlive time; when this life ceaſes they ceaſe with it: And nothing but the effects of our good or evil actions can attend us, when we depart hence. " Though one be made rich, and the glory of his houſe be increaſed, but when he dieth he ſhall carry nothing away, his glory ſhall not deſcend after him," *Pſal.* xlix. 16, 17. As man " came forth of his mother's womb, naked ſhall he return," *Eccl.* v. 15. " There is no diſtinction in the grave; the ſmall and great are there," *Job* iii. 19. not to be known from one another by any eſſential difference, but mixed together in one common heap of matter, till the general reſurrection; all reduced to the ſame rank, as they are children of one common parent, " by whom came death." Happy indeed in their having a joint and equal relation to him " who is the reſurrection and the life; who ſhall change our vile bodies, that they may be faſhioned like unto his glo-

rious body," in that place where diſtinctions ſhall be ſettled for ever, according to our reſpective behaviour in this ſhort life.

Fifthly, In the tranſitory ſcene of this world, we may obſerve that here are ſome parts more difficult to be well performed than others. Upon this view was founded *Agur's* petition to GOD, "Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord? or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my GOD in vain," *Prov.* xxx. 9. Upon this account, our Church teaches us to pray for deliverance from *danger*, as well in time of *Wealth* or Proſperity, as in time of *Tribulation*.

Riches are indeed by no means hurtful in themſelves, it is only the abuſe of them that makes them become ſo. GOD for wiſe purpoſes hath appointed different conditions amongſt men. "He maketh Rich, and lifteth up," 1 *Sam.* ii. 7. And they who "are rich in this world, may alſo be rich in good works, and lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come," 1 *Tim.* vi. 17. Perſons of ſuperior Rank and Fortune have it in their power more than others, to be highly uſeful both to the bodies and ſouls of men, by their charitable actions and good examples; and become as *ſhining lights* ſet up to direct thoſe below in the paths of their duty, and induce them to *glorify their Father which is in heaven*. *By well doing* they may perpetuate their felicity, but with infinite

refinements; (as the choiceſt enjoyments of this life ſcarce bear any proportion to the perfect joys of heaven;) exchange their large poſſeſſions for an "eternal inheritance;" their worldly honours for "a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" their pleaſant dwelling-places on earth, for *manſions* in heaven, for "a city, whoſe builder and maker is GOD," *Heb.* xi. 10. finiſhed by the infinite wiſdom of an almighty hand; concerning the beauties of which place, ſo many glorious things are ſpoken in the word of GOD. And inſtead of the praiſe and applauſe of men, they may ſecure to themſelves immortal honour, become "the children of the Higheſt," and ſhining in a ſuperior ſphere, "as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever." *Dan.* xii. 3.

But my buſineſs at preſent is not to give directions for the religious conduct of the Rich and Great *, but of the *Poor* and Neceſſitous:—You then are called to a trial of a quite different nature; but though Poverty has its ſeveral temptations, yet it is not in itſelf the neceſſary occaſion of any evil—You muſt carefully guard againſt thoſe dangers you are moſt liable to. You have the divine aſſiſtance to enable you to withſtand

* This hath been excellently done by the pious and learned *Robert Nelſon*, Eſq. in his *Addreſs to Perſons of Quality and Eſtate*: And it is much to be wiſhed, that this book was in the hands of all thoſe to whom it is addreſſed. The mentioning of it here will not be reckoned improper, as one great deſign of it was to promote the *Good* of the *Poor*, as well as the eternal *Intereſt* of the *Rich*.

the temptations which your condition throws in your way; and your reward will be the more increaſed by reſiſting them: You may be as "rich in faith" as any others, and have ability "to work out you ſalvation," and obtain a glorious inheritance in the next world.

Sixthly, As we are not to judge of GOD's *love* or *hatred* to the ſons of men, by looking only on the Good and Evil which happen to them in this world; we muſt therefore take this life and the next into the account, before we can make a true eſtimate. And upon a due repreſentation of the whole, what a ſhort and almoſt imperceptible part of our being, will the longeſt continuance here on earth appear to be, when compared with our future duration? Our life is repreſented in Scripture as a *vapour*, a *ſhadow*, a *ſpan*, as the *graſs* and *flower of the field*; to put us in mind how inconſiderable it is, comparatively ſpeaking, even as nothing, in reſpect of eternity. The author of the Book of *Wiſdom* deſcribes the things of this world, as "paſſing away like a ſhadow; as a poſt "that haſteth by; as a ſhip that paſſeth over "the waves, or as an arrow that is ſhot at a "mark; whoſe paths are not to be found, "as ſoon as they are gone by," *Chap.* v. 9, &c. Such repreſentations of life, and its enjoyments, were deſigned to teach perſons, that if they are in poſſeſſion of the *good* things of this world, they are not to fix their affection too much upon them, as being of ſo ſhort conti-

nuance; but be induced thereby to ſeek after thoſe everlaſting enjoyments which God hath *prepared for them that love him.* And if they are under afflictions of any kind, they are not to be much caſt down, as their ſufferings cannot laſt long, and are "not worthy to be compared with the eternal good things" they hope ſhortly to obtain. Thus "heavineſs may be endured for a night," upon aſſurance that "joy will come in the morning." Though this life be ſhort, or full of trouble, yet to the comfort of all religious perſons, "the merciful goodneſs of the Lord endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him," *Pſal.* ciii. 17. "Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted," *Matt.* v. 4. if they make a religious improvement under the afflictions they are tried with. The withdrawing worldly enjoyments may be deſigned to teach us to purſue more earneſtly our ſpiritual and eternal intereſts, and "ſet our affections on things above." God knows what is beſt for us in this ſtate of diſcipline; and we know that "all things work together for good to them that love God," *Rom.* viii. 28. So that there is no condition in which Providence has placed us, but what we may improve to our real advantage, if it be not our own fault.

Seventhly, We may juſt obſerve, that if we could weigh all things equally, the Rich and Poor would be found perhaps not to differ ſo much in the degrees of worldly happineſs, as is generally imagined; and that the

difference oftentimes conſiſted more in outward ſhew, than in the real enjoyments of life.—Perſons in a low condition are free from ſeveral cares and fears, diſcontents and dangers which the Great, the Wealthy, and the Ambitious are often liable to. Thus the lofty oaks, and ſtately towers, are frequently ſtruck with lightning, or ſhaken with the ſtormy wind and tempeſt, whilſt the humble ſhrubs and low built cottage remain ſecure below.—The great and wiſe King *Solomon*, in order to keep perſons of a low eſtate from diſcontent and envy, obſerves, that "the ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet, whether he eat much or little; but the abundance of the rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep," *Eccl.* v. 12. And our Saviour, who beſt knew what was good for man, *Chap.* vi. 12. aſſures us, that "man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth," *Luke* xii. 15. or that great abundance was not a neceſſary ingredient to make up human happineſs.—And St. *Paul* declares, that "godlineſs with contentment is great gain," 1 *Tim.* vi. 6.—Thus our preſent happineſs, in many caſes, depends in a great meaſure upon our own prudent and religious conduct; and every one, with a proper care, might have a greater ſhare than he generally enjoys.

But ſuppoſing that there is a very great difference in the degrees of human happineſs and miſery, and that theſe things do not by any means ſeem proportioned to the reſpective

behaviour of people in this life; if the virtuous and good at any time fall under unavoidable hardſhips and diſtreſſes;—or "the way of the wicked proſper, and they are happy who deal very treacherouſly," *Jer.* xii. 1.—Such inſtances afford an undeniable proof, that there muſt be a time and place hereafter, when a GOD of infinite goodneſs and juſtice will make a proper diſtinction between the Righteous and the Wicked; puniſh the one, and reward the other. Which great truth is fully declared to us in the holy Scripture: At the day of judgment all difficulties will be cleared up, that may ariſe from the unequal diſtribution of things in this life.

Eighthly, It may not be improper to obſerve, that if perſons bring themſelves into Poverty or Diſtreſs through their own vices and follies, as by *Idleneſs*, *Drunkenneſs*, or extravagancy of any kind, they muſt not look on their *Sufferings* as GOD's appointments, and charge his Providence with them, or by reaſon of their "own fooliſhneſs fret againſt the Lord," *Prov.* xix. 3. The *evil things* that happen to them, are not ſent as trials of their Patience and Virtue, but as puniſhments of their Offences; or muſt be conſidered as the bitter fruit of their own wickedneſs and miſconduct. Thus we read, that "the Drunkard and the Glutton ſhall come to poverty, and drowſineſs ſhall clothe a man with rags," *Prov.* xxiii. 21.—that "many ſorrows ſhall be to the wicked," *Pſal.* xxxii. 10.—and *Fools*, "becauſe of their tranſgreſ-

ſions and iniquities, are afflicted," *Pſal.* cvii. 17.—And upon inquiry we ſhall find, that many of the miſeries of this life, are in a great meaſure owing to ſuch cauſes; which is an evident proof of the folly and danger of Sin; and ſhould make perſons ſenſible of their faults, and by this means bring them ſooner to amendment of life.

II. SECONDLY, I ſhall ſhew more particularly how much it is the *Duty* and *Intereſt* of the *Poor* to ſerve and pleaſe GOD; and the great danger of neglecting to do ſo.

You have no juſt grounds to hope, that you ſhall be ſharers in the bleſſings proceeding from GOD's *Goodneſs*, if you live in diſobedience to his commandments. It is not your *Poverty*, but your Virtue, that makes you properly objects of the divine care and love: And though the wicked may partake of many of the common benefits of GOD's Providence, yet it is more than they can reaſonably expect; and they may in ſome meaſure be continued in the enjoyment of them, and alſo eſcape preſent puniſhment, for the ſake of the Righteous amongſt whom they live. Thus the *Tares* grew up with the *good Wheat*, and received nouriſhment along with it for a time, till harveſt came, when a proper diſtinction was made. And though this life was deſigned for a ſtate of trial, and not of rewards and puniſhments, yet GOD is ſometimes pleaſed even here to manifeſt his diſpleaſure againſt the wicked: and we read

in Scripture, that "many evils and troubles ſhall befal them," *Deut.* xxxi. 17. that their ſins have withholden "good things from them," *Jer.* v. 25. and "GOD, will curſe their bleſſings," *Mal.* ii. 2.—On the other hand,—that "he bleſſeth the habitation of the juſt," *Prov.* iii. 33. that "the righteous ſhall be recompenſed in the earth," *Prov.* xi. 31. and "Godlineſs is profitable to all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 2 *Tim.* iv. 8.—Beſides, we may obſerve, that as religious perſons are generally moſt charitable; the Poor, who live in the fear of GOD, will be conſidered as the firſt and moſt proper objects of compaſſion.—Thus, "the fear of the Lord is wiſdom," in regard to the preſent advantage it brings, as it is the beſt means you can make uſe of to promote your preſent happineſs in this life, and avoid many temporal evils and inconveniences; but however, it will not fail to ſecure eternal enjoyments in the life to come:—whereas wickedneſs cuts off all hopes of future happineſs in all degrees of men.—As the rich man, mentioned in the Goſpel, was not puniſhed in a future ſtate becauſe he had received his *good things* here; ſo neither was *Lazarus* intitled to a place in *Abraham's* boſom becauſe he had been poor, or received his *evil things*:—The firſt, if he had not made a wrong uſe of what he poſſeſſed, might have exchanged temporal enjoyments for eternal ones:—And the latter was comforted after death, not becauſe he was afflicted here,

but becauſe he behaved himſelf in a religious and proper manner in the condition he was in; otherwiſe he might have been miſerable hereafter, as well as poor here.—He did not, we muſt ſuppoſe, murmur againſt divine providence, call in queſtion GOD's goodneſs, or uſe any unlawful means to free himſelf from his low condition; but put his truſt and confidence in GOD, hoping that in a ſhort time he ſhould be made partaker of the divine bounty and love; and that though he ſuffered in this life, yet in the life to come he ſhould meet with a full recompenſe; ſo that though "he was puniſhed in the ſight of man, yet was his hope full of immortality," *Wiſdom* iii. 4.—GOD was pleaſed to order it ſo, that he ſhould undergo a ſevere trial, to make him thereby a more illuſtrious example of virtue, and that he might come out "like gold tried and refined in the furnace."—And it is an inſtance to teach us, that GOD may ſometimes ſuffer his faithful ſervants to undergo great hardſhips and difficulties in this world.

When our Saviour declares, "Bleſſed be ye Poor, for yours is the kingdom of GOD," *Luke* vi. 20. it is only meant of the *religious Poor*, (and the words might be ſpoken with a particular view to the diſtreſſed condition of the diſciples at that time.)—Thus then, by a neglect of your duty, you deſtroy your title both to GOD's preſent and future favour. If in your Miſery or Poverty you forget GOD, he will forget or overlook you, and then are ye *Poor* indeed; as having no comfort here,

or hopes of any enjoyments hereafter; nothing left but the diſmal proſpect of *eternal woe.*

For your better aſſiſtance in the performance of your Duty, I ſhall mention ſome particulars which may be of more immediate uſe to you in the condition you are in.

1*ſt*, You muſt remember to return thanks to GOD for his goodneſs and mercies towards you; for your Creation, Preſervation, and all the Bleſſings of this life; but more eſpecially for the ineſtimable ſpiritual Benefits which belong to you, for the Redemption of your Souls by CHRIST your Saviour, for the preſent means of *Grace*, and hope of *Glory* hereafter.—This is but a grateful and neceſſary return, and what GOD requires at your hands: "Let all fleſh bleſs his holy Name," *Pſalm* cxlv. 21. "All ye his ſervants, and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great, praiſe the Lord," *Rev.* xix. 5. As *Chriſtians*, ye muſt remember, "to give thanks always for all things unto GOD and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," *Eph.* v. 20. "To give thanks to him, who hath made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; tranſlated you into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom you have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of your ſins," *Col.* i. 12, 13.

And as the neceſſary ſupplies of life proceed from GOD's bounty, you muſt be careful to offer your conſtant prayers to him for your *daily bread:* The *Poor* ought to be more par-

ticularly diligent in *waiting upon* GOD, and beg that he would give *them their meat in due ſeaſon*; as their whole dependence is more immediately upon him, and they have not much beforehand for their ſupport; nor can they ſay, with the Rich man in the Goſpel, "Soul, ſoul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years."—"When GOD openeth his hand, they are filled with good; but when he hideth his face, (or withdraweth his common, or cuſtomary bounty) they are troubled," and are the firſt ſufferers.

Our Saviour gives ſufficient encouragement to perſons to pray unto GOD for what they want, or is proper for them; "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that aſk him?" *Matt.* vii. 7, &c. not only *ſpiritual good things*, but ſuch *temporal good things* as are *beſt* for them.

2*dly*, As GOD is the "Father of mercies, the GOD of all comfort and conſolation," 2 *Cor.* i. 3. when you are under any trouble or temptation, you muſt fly to him for ſuccour; beg that the "cup may paſs from you, or that he will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 *Cor.* x. 13.—"That he would comfort and relieve you according to your ſeveral neceſſities, and give you patience under your ſufferings, and a

"happy iſſue out of all your afflictions."—"Is any among you afflicted, ſays St. *James*, let him pray," *Chap.* v. 13.—"Call upon me, ſaith the Lord, in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee," *Pſal.* l. 15.—Our Saviour directs perſons "always to pray, and not to faint," *Luke* xviii. 1. or not to be tired, if they do not meet with immediate relief.—"If thou faint in the day of adverſity, ſays King *Solomon*, thy ſtrength is ſmall," *Prov.* xxiv. 10.—We muſt not ſet limits to God's will and pleaſure; but let our prayers and endeavours patiently attend the ſeaſon thought proper by divine providence: "be ſober, and hope to the end."

You have many precedents, or forms of prayer, drawn up ready for your uſe in the holy Scripture, eſpecially in the *Pſalms* (in which book you will find a great many paſſages that will afford comfort to the diſtreſſed) you may ſay in the words of the Pſalmiſt, "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and needy."—"Be merciful to me, and comfort the ſoul of thy ſervant, for I will call daily upon thee: ſhew me a token for good," *Pſal.* lxxxvi. 1, &c. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my truſt, let me never be put to confuſion; deliver me in thy righteouſneſs," *Pſal.* lxxi. 1, &c. So may you hope, that the Lord, who is plenteous in mercy to them that call upon him, will anſwer you in the day of trouble, will hear your prayer, and will help you." And that God, "who comforteth thoſe that are caſt

down," will comfort you alſo, 2 *Cor.* vii. 6. and that you "ſhall ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living;" or in this preſent life.

But then, in order to make your prayers heard or accepted at the throne of Grace, you muſt be careful to live in obedience to GOD's commandments, for "GOD heareth not ſinners," *John* ix. 31. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, ſays King *David*, the Lord will not hear me," *Pſal.* lxvi. 18. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law of GOD, even his prayer ſhall be an abomination," *Prov.* xxviii. 9. whereas "the prayer of the upright is his delight," *Prov.* xv. 8. "He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him, he will hear their cry, and will ſave them," *Pſalm* cxlv. 19.—Thus if you endeavour to qualify yourſelves properly for putting up your Petitions to GOD, or enforce your prayers by a religious and good life; ſo may you hope "to be fed," *Pſal.* xxxvii. 3. or be ſupplied with the neceſſary proviſions of life; and that GOD "will not caſt you off in the time of old age, nor forſake you when your ſtrength faileth," *Pſal.* lxxi. 9.

3dly, As *Chriſtians*, ye muſt be careful to diſcharge the ſeveral parts of your holy Profeſſion to the beſt of your power, as you find it deſcribed in the New Teſtament; remembering, that you have not any title to the kingdom of heaven by *Nature*, but by *Grace*; not as you are *Men*, but as *Chriſtians*. By nature, man is in a weak, cor-

rupt, and fallen condition; "all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of GOD," *Rom.* iii. 23. It is then through CHRIST our Saviour that we muſt hope for Salvation; and they who are "without the knowledge of him, are repreſented as ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe, and having no well-grounded hope," *Eph.* ii. 12. "Eternal life, we are aſſured, is the gift of GOD, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord," *Rom.* vi. 23.

But then the bare name of *Chriſtians* will not ſecure to us the glorious Privileges and Promiſes of the Goſpel. To a true faith in Chriſt we muſt add a conſcientious regard to all his Commandments; and conſider, that he became "the author of ſalvation only to thoſe that obey him," *Heb.* v. 9. Conſtant diligence and induſtry are required in order to go on to perfection, and excel in the *Chriſtian calling*, as well as in any other: and though all perſons are not obliged to the like application in the purſuit of worldly buſineſs; yet all ranks and degrees of men are equally concerned, to take care that their "converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt," and diligently endeavour to *work out* their own eternal ſalvation. This buſineſs no other perſon can do for them; and a due ſenſe of Religion cannot be kept up in the mind, unleſs perſons continue in a diligent practice of it, and "exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs," 1 *Tim.* iv. 7. Without this care, "men of high and low degree walk in vain ſhew, and ſpend their ſtrength for nought."

Now as our Saviour has done and ſuffered ſo much for you, as well as for others, in order to redeem your ſouls, and make you capable of inheriting *everlaſting life*; and hath alſo ſhewn a particular regard to you in this life, by honouring you with the title of *Brethren*, and making you ſo far his *Repreſentatives*, as to look upon the *good* done to you, as done to Himſelf: all this calls for the greateſt gratitude and love. You ſhould take all the methods you can to ſhew yourſelves his diſciples *in deed and in truth*. One thing that I ſhall more particularly recommend to your care is, your diligent attendance on the public worſhip of God, more eſpecially on the *Lord's Day*: by which means ye will not only better underſtand your Chriſtian duty, but alſo publicly diſtinguiſh yourſelves as members of the Body or Church of CHRIST. One day in ſeven is to be a reſt from your labour, but not an idle, unprofitable reſt. The day is to be ſanctified, or eſteemed holy, ſet apart more particularly for the worſhip of GOD, and exerciſe of religious duties. In the Old Teſtament, that man is pronounced *bleſſed*, who "kept the ſabbath day from polluting it," *Iſaiah* lvi. 2. who reckoned it "a delight, the holy of the Lord, not doing on that day is own ways, nor finding or purſuing his own worldly pleaſures," *Iſaiah* lviii. 13. Chriſtians then cannot think themſelves exempt from the ſame religious care (though they are not tied to that ſtrict reſt which the *Jews* were to obſerve:) They muſt look upon

the Lord's Day as deſigned and ſet apart for promoting their ſpiritual and eternal intereſt. And they will certainly incur the diſpleaſure of the *Lord of the Sabbath*, who neglect the proper duties of that day; or perhaps ſpend it to worſe purpoſe than any other part of their time; doing their own *pleaſure* on this holy day more than on any other day. If perſons are to abſtain from their ordinary labour, that they may be better enabled to ſpend the day in religious exerciſes; they are much more obliged to abſtain from their diverſions and pleaſures, which will indiſpoſe their minds for things of a ſerious and religious nature.

The children of *Iſrael*, we read, were to be ſeverely puniſhed for the breach of the Sabbath. "Every one that defileth it ſhall ſurely be put to death. That ſoul ſhall be cut off from amongſt his people," *Exod.* xxxi. 13, 14. And public Judgments are threatened againſt the nation upon this account, *Jer.* xvii. 27. Though we live under a milder and more gracious diſpenſation than that of *Moſes*, yet are we obliged to go on to a greater perfection in Religion and Godlineſs than the *Jews* were; and a wilful neglect of any part of our duty, expoſes us to eternal puniſhment in a life to come. And thoſe Chriſtians who miſemploy the Lord's Day, and "forſake the aſſembling themſelves together, as the manner of ſome is," *Heb.* x. 25. cut themſelves off from the ſociety of God's Church and People here, and are in danger of being eternally

cut off from the bleſſed ſociety of Saints and Angels in the world to come.

It is fit and neceſſary then, that one part of this day ſhould be ſpent in joining with our Chriſtian Brethren in the public Worſhip of GOD, in paying our "vows unto the Lord in the preſence of his people, in the courts of the Lord's houſe," *Pſal.* cxvi. 18, 19. The regarding it in this manner, is what all faithful Chriſtians muſt think themſelves obligated to; and they who are unconcerned about this duty, or ſpend their time idly, whilſt others are employed about things of the greateſt importance, act quite inconſiſtently with the Character of a *Chriſtian*, and their conduct admits of no excuſe. Nor is it enough to appear now and then at the public Worſhip, juſt as it ſuits your fancy or leiſure; you muſt make it a conſtant practice, unleſs you have ſome very neceſſary reaſon for your abſence. Nor muſt you think that this *reſt* is any real hindrance to you in procuring your *daily bread:* as GOD has appointed it, He can and will bleſs your labour the more on the other ſix days of the week; and if ye employ it otherwiſe than as He hath ordained, your endeavours will rather bring a curſe than a bleſſing: and we are told, that they "who went out on the Sabbath-day to gather manna, found none," *Exod.* xvi. 27.

A religious attendance on the *public Worſhip* will be a good means of leſſening the weight of your *poverty*, or affliction, by being *there* admitted to converſe with GOD,

and come more immediately into his preſence; for, "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midſt of them," *Matt.* xviii. 20. Here your minds will be filled with comfortable hopes of eternal *good things* to come. And your preſent low condition will give you little uneaſineſs, when you have your thoughts employed on that ſtate, where every one in a ſhort time ſhall be ranked in ſtations of honour or contempt, happineſs or miſery, in proportion to their good or evil behaviour in this life, and ſhall remain fixed in them to all eternity. This *holy reſt* on the Lord's Day may put you in mind of entering into that heavenly and everlaſting "reſt, which remaineth for the people of GOD," *Heb.* iv. 9. where there ſhall be "no more ſorrow and pain, but a full enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures which are at GOD's right hand." King *David*, we find, when under perſecution, repreſents it as the moſt grievous part of his ſufferings, to be deprived of the *comfort* of going to the houſe of GOD. "My ſoul thirſteth for GOD: when ſhall I come and appear before GOD," *Pſal.* xlii. 2.

In other places you are looked upon as of a lower and inferior rank, and perhaps with contempt, by perſons who judge by outward appearances, and worldly circumſtances; but in the *Church*, or *Aſſembly of Saints*, Pſalm lxxxix. 7. the *Rich* and *Poor* meet together upon a level; and "GOD, who is the Maker of them all," *Prov.* xxii. 2. and "no reſpecter of perſons," is equally attentive to their

prayers. They are now to be conſidered as brethren joined together in unity of affection, all worſhipping the ſame GOD, and with *one accord*, and *one mind*, making their common ſupplications unto Him. They are drawn into mutual communion and fellowſhip, as they are members of the ſame *Body*, of which CHRIST is the *Head*, and have the ſame hopes of being admitted into the bleſſed ſociety of *Saints and Angels in heaven*; and may in one ſenſe be ſaid to "ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus," *Eph.* ii. 6. Thus you ſee how many ſtrong inducements you have to perform this Chriſtian Service; and may be aſſured, that your prayers and praiſes are as acceptable at the throne of Grace, as thoſe offered up by the Great and Wealthy; and will aſcend without diſtinction amongſt the "prayers of Saints, as a grateful incenſe to GOD," *Rev.* viii. 3. For the ſame Lord over all is "rich unto all that call upon him," *Rom.* x. 12. Beſides, as a preſent encouragement to this duty, by a diligent and religious performance of it, ye will become more immediate objects of human compaſſion and aſſiſtance: thoſe who are of ability, will have their hearts more particularly enlarged to their poor brethren, engaged with them in the ſame pious work; as they are aſking for themſelves much greater favours at GOD's hand. Thus the lame man, who was miraculouſly cured by St. *Peter* at the Temple, attended there to aſk alms of ſuch as

came to perform their devotions; imagining that *Charity* and *Piety* met together.

When *Tobit* is directing his Son to give "alms according to his abundance," he puts in this caution, "but give nothing to the wicked," *Tobit* iv. 16, 17. As thinking, perhaps, that they would make an ill uſe of it; or that they might be ſooner reclaimed from their ſin and folly by ſuch a diſtinction. Chriſtians indeed, as they "have opportunity are to do good to all men, but more eſpecially to them who are of the houſhold of faith," *Gal.* vi. 10.—The unthankful and the evil, when in diſtreſs, are not wholly to be paſſed by; but the religious poor are firſt to be regarded: and they whoſe converſation is unbecoming *the Goſpel of Chriſt*, and who rarely or never aſſemble themſelves with their Chriſtian brethren in public worſhip, can ſcarce indeed be ſaid to belong to the *houſhold of faith*.

As to the excuſe which ſome perſons make, that they want proper apparel to appear in on ſuch occaſions: this is a very weak one, and diſcovers a ſecret pride of heart; if they take care to "put on Chriſt," *Gal.* iii. 27. be "clothed with humility," and other Chriſtian graces; they will have on the *wedding garment*, which will render them acceptable in the ſight of GOD, whoſe favour is the firſt thing to be regarded. The ornament moſt valuable in his ſight, is "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible," 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. or an upright mind and pious affections. Our reaſon will indeed teach us, that a de-

cent neatneſs in attire is well becoming thoſe "who go to the houſe of GOD with the voice of joy and praiſe," *Pſal.* xlii. 4. But perſons muſt carefully beware of all pride upon account of their dreſs or apparel; nor value themſelves or deſpiſe others upon ſuch trifling and inconſiderable differences: for by ſuch behaviour they deſtroy the proper deſign of appearing there, and will be reckoned amongſt the "proud, whom GOD reſiſteth," *James* iv. 6. And the ſame Apoſtle tells the Chriſtian brethren, how wrong it was to reſpect perſons the more for coming into their aſſemblies in *goodly apparel* and *gay clothing*; or eſteem the poor man the leſs for appearing in "vile raiment." *James* ii. 1, *&c.*

4*thly*, Your condition calls you to exerciſe the duties of Patience, Contentment, and Submiſſion to the will of GOD. How remarkable was the pious reſignation of *Job*, when he was reduced even to the loweſt ſtate of human miſery, from the height of proſperity (which muſt make his trial and affliction ſtill greater;) "Naked," ſays he, "came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither," (or to the ground, upon which he was juſt then fallen.) "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord," *Job* i. 20, 21. And this religious behaviour was the means of reſtoring him again to his former proſperity. "Humble yourſelves, ſays St. *James*, in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up," *James* iv. 10. He will remove your afflictions,

or elſe give you ſtrength to bear them, and improve them to your everlaſting advantage. As an inducement to Contentment in your condition, you muſt conſider, that GOD governs the world by his providence. Though by nature all are equal, yet there are wiſe reaſons for appointing a difference in their preſent outward circumſtances. "All men are from the ground, yet in much knowledge the Lord hath divided them, and made their ways diverſe," *Ecclus* xxxiii. 10, 11. "He maketh poor, and he maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up," 1 *Sam.* ii. 7. The different conditions amongſt men tend to the better government and order in human affairs: Some are to rule, others muſt obey, and be ready to perform ſeveral neceſſary offices in life, which contribute to the eaſe and happineſs of thoſe above them; ſo that they help and aſſiſt each other: And by this ſubordination the good of ſociety is advanced, and its peace preſerved. The body politic, or civil ſociety, may fitly be compared to the body natural; which, as the Apoſtle obſerves, "is not one member, but many; differing in office and dignity. GOD having ſet the members every one in the body, as it hath pleaſed him. And the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you," 1 *Cor.* xii. 17, &c. As GOD hath ſo appointed that there ſhould be different degrees and ranks in life, for the good of the whole; thoſe placed

in the loweſt ſtations muſt act with prudence, and due decorum of fitneſs, in the place aſſigned them by the ſupreme LORD and diſpoſer of all things. They muſt not be envious at the condition of thoſe placed above them, but behave themſelves lowly and reverently to all their betters;—"Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour," *Rom.* xiii. 7. and do their duty carefully in that ſtate of life unto which they are called; not murmuring, becauſe providence did not aſſign them a higher ſtation in the body. "Wo to him that ſtriveth with his Maker," *Iſa.* xlv. 9. "Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?" *Rom.* ix. 20. And the Rich and Poor, by a ſuitable behaviour in their reſpective ſtations, will hereafter be made joint partakers of the kingdom of heaven, where there will be a perfect harmony and union of ſouls. In that "fulneſs of joy that abounds in the preſence of GOD," there will be enough for all; ſo that there can be no room for envy or uneaſineſs.

As the Goſpel enjoins the duty of Contentment, ſo does it teach and enable perſons to attain this virtue. Our Saviour encourages the Poor to look for *food and raiment* from the hands of their heavenly Father, by directing them to conſider his care for the "fowls of the air, and the flowers of the field: Shall he not much more clothe you? Are ye not much better than

they?" You muſt indeed obſerve the condition upon which the promiſe is built; "Seek ye firſt the kingdom of GOD, and his righteouſneſs; and all theſe things (*viz.* the neceſſary ſupplies of life) ſhall be added unto you."—*Therefore*, ſays he, "take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment," *Matt.* vi. 25, *&c.* As GOD of his *Goodneſs* beſtows upon man the great bleſſings of *Life*, he will not deny him what is neceſſary to ſupport it; but "will give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on," *Gen.* xxviii. 20. When our Saviour ſays in this place, "take no thought for this life," (agreeably to which St. *Paul* adviſes his Chriſtian brethren, "to be careful for nothing; but in every thing to let their requeſts be made known unto GOD," *Phil.* iv. 6. people were not hereby forbid to take due care for the neceſſaries of life; only *directed* not to be too *anxious* about them, or of a "doubtful mind," *Luke* xii. 29.—If they uſed the proper means in their power for their ſupport, they were not to be diſtruſtful of GOD's *care and providence*.

The beſt way we can then take to advance our preſent happineſs is, to copy after St. *Paul*'s example, who had learnt (by what the Chriſtian religion taught him) "in whatever ſtate he was, therewith to be content; how to ſuffer need, as well as abound," *Phil.* iv. 11, 12. "Having food and raiment (ſays the ſame Apoſtle) let us be therewith content,"

1 *Tim.* vi. 8. And he ſhews at the ſame time, the great danger of being too intent upon the things of this world, or reſolving at all adventures to have a large ſhare of *them:* and that by ſuch purſuits many "have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows," *ver.* 10. And he hath not only taught us, that "godlineſs with contentment is great gain," 1 *Tim.* vi. 6. but he fully knew, by experience, the ſweet delight and laſting peace of mind which it afforded. *Contentment* properly ſignifies a kind of *ſufficiency* within ourſelves; it teaches perſons to reſt ſatisfied in the enjoyment of ſuch "things as they have," *Heb.* xiii. 5. to *rule* their *will*, to keep their appetites and deſires within due bounds, not letting their thoughts run out after ſuch things, as in their preſent circumſtances they can have no reaſonable hopes of obtaining. And it is a virtue, or ſteadineſs of mind, not to be acquired without a due knowledge and love of GOD, and partaking of the joys and comfortable expectations flowing from religion. It is not inconſiſtent with the duty of *Chriſtian Contentment*, for perſons to uſe prudent and lawful means to remove any difficulties they are under, and endeavour to *better* their condition, or worldly circumſtances, for their own more comfortable ſupport, and that they may have the pleaſure to "give to him that needeth," *Eph.* iv. 28. But if they fail in the attempt, they are not to murmur and repine; but learn

to "ſubmit themſelves to GOD, and ſay upon all occaſions, The will of the Lord be done," *Acts* xxi. 14. "It is the LORD; let him do what ſeemeth him good," 1 *Samuel* iii. 18. They muſt not "caſt away their confidence (upon account of their preſent wants and neceſſities) knowing that in heaven they have a better and an enduring ſubſtance," *Heb.* x. 34.

As religion requires a cheerful dependence on GOD, ſo does it enable perſons to preſerve it in the worſt of circumſtances. "I am he that comforteth you, ſaith the Lord: Who art thou that thou ſhouldſt be afraid?" *Iſaiah* li. 12. "In the multitude of ſorrows that I had in my heart (ſays the Pſalmiſt) thy comforts, O Lord, have refreſhed my ſoul," *Pſalm* xciv. 19. St. *Paul* bids the Diſciples under perſecutions and ſufferings, "rejoice in the Lord always," *Phil.* iv. 4. And they are encouraged to this behaviour, by being put in mind, that their "converſation, and great expectations were in heaven," *chap.* iii. 20. How remarkable was the holy confidence of the Prophet, who declares, "Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vine; though the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat; though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the GOD of my ſalvation," *Hab.* iii. 17, 18.—"My fleſh and my heart faileth: but GOD is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever," *Pſalm* lxxiii. 28.

The Goſpel teaches us to "rejoice in hope," *Rom.* xii. 12. If at any time we are deprived of the outward bleſſings of this life, yet are we to comfort ourſelves with the thoughts of GOD's *Goodneſs*, truſting that in due time he will remove the uneaſineſs or afflictions we labour under, and will ſupport us in the mean time, if we call upon him for help. So that in worldly affairs, *religious Hope* is a remedy againſt Deſpair: In our ſpiritual concerns, it is an "anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt," *Heb.* vi. 19.

Saint *Paul* ſays, We "glory in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, (or a proper trial of our virtue and ſincerity) and experience hope," *Rom.* v. 3, 4. Thus Chriſtians are taught to *rejoice* even in *ſufferings*, as theſe may be inſtrumental in promoting the great end of their *Hopes*, viz. *eternal life*. And a proper behaviour under thoſe trials may give them a good degree of aſſurance concerning their *future Happineſs*. We muſt obſerve, that the *work of righteouſneſs*, or obedience to GOD's commandments, is the only foundation upon which we can build the pleaſing *Hope*, and comfortable Aſſurance of GOD's favour.—"The hope of the righteous only ſhall be gladneſs; but the expectation of the wicked ſhall periſh," *Prov.* x. 28. "The hope of the ungodly is like *duſt*, that is blown away with the *wind*; like the *thin froth*, that is driven away with the ſtorm, or ſmoke diſperſed

here and there with a tempeſt; but the reward of the righteous is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the *moſt High*," Wiſd. v. 14.

Thus all good Chriſtians may make themſelves eaſy in this life becauſe they hope to be happy in the life to come. They will not be much diſcompoſed with the ſtorms they meet with, as knowing they will quickly be blown over, and that they ſhall enter into a joyful harbour at laſt. And though the "waves are mighty, and rage horribly; yet the Lord who dwelleth on high, is mightier." The clouds and darkneſs they are under, will ſoon be diſperſed by the brightneſs of that glorious day which will ſhortly *break* upon them; and this aſſurance will afford them that peace "which the world cannot give."

Thus a true belief of the Goſpel, and a ſuitable practice, is the beſt remedy for "thoſe that mourn in *Zion* (as the Prophet *Iſaiah* expreſſes it) to give to them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs," *Iſa.* lxi. 3. Which deſcription relates to the Goſpel ſtate, and the great bleſſings that attend it.

5*thly*, No difficulties or hardſhips muſt at any time tempt you to uſe unlawful or diſhoneſt means in order to remove them. It was part of *Agur's* prayer to GOD, that he might not fall into "poverty; leſt, ſays he, I be poor, and ſteal," *Prov.* xxx. 9. This then is a temptation you are particularly to guard againſt. No perſons amongſt us can

be under any neceſſity of relieving their wants by wrong or ſinful means, or "ſteal to ſatisfy the ſoul when it is hungry," *Prov.* vi. 30. They may have neceſſary ſupplies, either from their own honeſt induſtry, or the compaſſionate aſſiſtance of good Chriſtians, who will be ready to *help them*; or, if other proper methods fail, they may apply to thoſe who are appointed by the *Laws* to ſee that the *Poor* be kept from ſuffering by any extreme want. And if they ſometimes meet with hardſhips for the ſake of maintaining their integrity, ſo much greater is their virtue, and the more glorious will be their future reward; and their own conſcience, in the mean time, will be a kind of perpetual feaſt: It will comfort and carry them on with a kind of triumph through the difficulties which oppoſe themſelves. "The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace; and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever." But if perſons uſe wicked means to free themſelves from their neceſſities; wilfully affront that GOD from whom all bleſſings flow; "forſake Him, the fountain of living waters, and hew themſelves out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water," *Jer.* ii. 13. and "cover with a covering, but not of GOD:" to ſuch we may properly apply the words of the Prophet; "Surely theſe are poor, they are fooliſh: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their GOD," *Jer.* v. 4. By renouncing their dependence on GOD, they be-

come indeed *of all men moſt miſerable:* They can expect little enjoyment in this life, nor can have any hopes of a better condition in that which is to come; ſo that no ſtate can be more uncomfortable than that of *vicious poverty.* It is your duty and intereſt then, to ſet God always "before your eyes; to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long: for ſurely there is an end, and thy expectations ſhall not be cut off," *Prov.* xxiii. 17, 18. You muſt conſider, that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," *Prov.* xv. 3. and there is no "darkneſs, where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves," *Job* xxxiv. 22. GOD ſees the moſt private wickedneſs, and will puniſh perſons for it. "If ſinners at any time entice you to join with them in any diſhoneſt practices, conſent you not." If they propoſe profit and advantage thereby, and ſay; "We ſhall find precious ſubſtance, and fill our houſes with ſpoil: Walk not thou in the way of them; refrain thy foot from their path," *Prov.* i. 10, *&c.* Reſolve to anſwer them in the words of the Pſalmiſt: "Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my GOD." *Pſal.* cxix. 115. The following ſevere denunciation might be ſufficient to deter any perſons from this evil practice, namely, "the curſe of the Lord of hoſts ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief: and remain in the midſt of it, and conſume it," *Zech.* v. 3, 4. or bring the inhabitants of it utterly to ruin. And this indeed we find moſt commonly verified.

Perſons guilty of this ſin generally live in a poor and miſerable manner, without any comfort in themſelves, or pity from others; nay, they often bring upon themſelves puniſhment, and a *ſhameful* death, as the bitter fruit or wages of their tranſgreſſion; and what is ſtill more dreadful, without due repentance they will fall under the eternal diſpleaſure of GOD.—And as *idleneſs* is often a temptation to diſhoneſty, the Apoſtle directs perſons not to be "*ſlothful in buſineſs*," Rom. xii. 11. that "with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread," 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 12. "Let him, ſays he, that ſtole, ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth," *Eph.* iv. 28. GOD commonly gives a bleſſing to an honeſt induſtry; "proſpers the handy-work of the diligent;" ſo that they not only oftentimes free themſelves from want, but even become capable of relieving others.

6*thly*, You muſt not be tempted to make uſe of any *falſhood* in your *words*, in order to free yourſelves from any preſent difficulties; for ſuch behaviour is highly offenſive to a GOD of truth and faithfulneſs. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight," *Prov.* xii. 22. And as Chriſtians, we are frequently admoniſhed in the Goſpel to beware of this ſin. It will be your wiſdom to refrain from it, even in regard to *preſent* advantage; for it generally deſtroys

in the end thoſe very deſigns which perſons would accompliſh by it, *viz.* their *profit* and *intereſt*. When perſons guilty of this practice are diſcovered (as they ſoon are by thoſe who converſe with them) it ruins their character and credit, and people decline dealing with them: If they are *poor*, they will not be truſted; as their word is not to be relied upon, (even perhaps when they mean ſincerely) becauſe they have often been known to falſify it; and by this means they may be frequently brought to great ſtraits and difficulties. *Truth* is then the ſafeſt way people can take to promote their worldly intereſt; and though contrary practices do ſometimes ſucceed, yet do they often fail, and bring on great inconveniences. So true is the obſervation of King *Solomon*, "The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed, but a lying tongue is but for a moment," *Prov.* xii. 19.

7thly, In regard to your behaviour, let it be humble and modeſt. When we conſider the imperfection and corruption of human nature, and the ſhort duration of any worldly ſuperiority; it is evident that "Pride was not made for man," *Ecclus* x. 18. and that *Humility* becometh perſons placed even in the higheſt ſtations; but it is more particularly ſuitable to thoſe in the loweſt rank of life.—And this behaviour will gain you the eſteem and approbation both of GOD and man.—"Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly," *Pſalm* cxxxviii. 6. "Learn of me, ſays our Saviour, for I am

meek and lowly," *Matt.* xi. 29. as knowing this temper was neceſſary for the practice of ſeveral Chriſtian virtues. And the "poor in ſpirit (of every degree) are declared to be bleſſed; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," *Matt.* v. 3.

As to thoſe who are reduced to the neceſſity of being *conſtantly* ſupported by the *Alms* of their chriſtian brethren, a modeſt behaviour, accompanied with *thankfulneſs*, certainly becomes them, and is due to thoſe whom GOD of his *Goodneſs* has appointed to take care of them in their diſtreſs. By this means the proper ſupplies will be adminiſtered to them, as to perſons of the ſame family; "not grudgingly or of neceſſity, but with a chearful and ready heart," 2 *Cor.* ix. 7. Such a conduct will alſo tend to the intereſt of the Poor; as it will help to ſecure a continuance of that relief appointed by human laws (which are changeable) or increaſe it, where it is found neceſſary. And when the poor are relieved this way, or by the private benefactions of charitable chriſtians, they muſt employ what they receive in a proper and prudent manner, to neceſſary and fitting purpoſes. So may they the better hope for the like favours again; and that GOD will influence the hearts of thoſe *who have it in their power* to do good.

It may not be improper juſt to obſerve, that they who live on the labours and induſtry of others, ought by no means to be careleſs or *idle* themſelves; but be diligent in doing what they are able to do: and this will keep

them from paſſing away their time unprofitably, or ſinfully; from "wandering about from houſe to houſe (as St. *Paul* complains of ſome *idle* perſons) by which they are in danger of becoming "tatlers, buſy bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not," 1 *Tim.* v. 13. The ſame Apoſtle in order to keep perſons from "walking diſorderly and idly, commands, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat," 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 10. They who were able to work, were not to expect maintenance from the labours of others. Thus we ſee people are obliged, both by duty and intereſt, "to labour diligently and truly to get their own living."

But the poor and infirm ſhould not loſe any opportunity of advancing their *eternal intereſt*: Tho' their hands be too *feeble*, through age or infirmities, to ſupply themſelves with the neceſſaries of this life; yet are they able "to work out their ſalvation, and labour to enter into the reſt prepared for the people of GOD," *Heb.* iv. 11. to go to CHRIST, and "drink of the river of living water," to which he ſo kindly invites all, (*John* vii. 37, *&c.*) and taſte of the "bread of life, which cometh down from heaven," *John* vi. 33. And if the ſoul has little or no inclination to things of this nature, it is an evident proof of a great and dangerous indiſpoſition in it. "My ſoul, ſays King *David*, thirſteth for GOD," *Pſalm* xliii. 2. "Bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled," *Matt.* v. 6. the deſires of their ſouls

ſhall be ſatisfied. It ought to be the particular pleaſure of the Poor, to get an intereſt in GOD, who is able to comfort them in their preſent diſtreſs, and hath promiſed hereafter to wipe away *all tears from their eyes*, and prepare unſpeakable *good things* for all thoſe that love him.

8*thly*, In regard to your converſation, or common diſcourſe: As "all men muſt give an account to GOD for every *idle*, or vain, and wicked word that they ſhall ſpeak, and be juſtified or condemned by their words," *Matt.* xii. 36, 37. this ſhould make you "ſet a watch over your mouth, keep the door of your lips," (*Pſal.* cxli. 3.) and be careful, no "corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," *Eph.* iv. 29.—How inconſiſtent then with the character of a Chriſtian is that wicked cuſtom of *profane Oaths* and Curſes, too common amongſt many of the *lower* rank of life, as well as thoſe above them! "Swear not at all, ſays our Saviour; but let your communications be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil," *Matt.* v. 34. Affirm or deny things in your common converſation, without any Oaths or Curſes; for ſuch like language cometh of *evil*, or *that evil One*, viz. the *Devil*, as the word may be properly underſtood. As there can be no temptation to this ſin by any profit or pleaſure which it yields; it may be looked upon as proceeding more immediately from the ſuggeſtion or influence of that *evil One*, and ſo is a ſin of a *deviliſh* nature indeed. When

people let their paſſions carry them too far, by which means they are off their guard, and want words to give vent to the violence of their rage; the Tempter watching ſuch opportunities, prompts or ſupplies them as it were with what they are to ſay; ſo that they oftentimes go on fluently in profane language. And this ſeems to be the caſe alſo with many, when off their guard by *drunkenneſs*, or the violent purſuit of ſome kinds of gaming and diverſions; "Then do they clothe themſelves with curſing like as with a garment," *Pſalm* cix. 18. how ſhocking is it to hear them, perhaps, utter ſcarce any thing elſe but profane Oaths! All this may be looked on as a kind of *aiabolical inſpiration*, (the language of *Hell*) oppoſed to the divine influence of GOD's holy Spirit, and to every thing that is ſerious and *religious*. So that in one ſenſe ſuch perſons may be ſaid to be *delivered to Satan*, to be under his power, or in his poſſeſſion; and "their tongue to be ſet on fire of hell, and to be full of deadly poiſon," *James* iii. 6. This wicked practice may be looked upon as part of the *overflowings of ungodlineſs*, committed out of madneſs and folly, and done as it were for wickedneſs ſake; and the perſons guilty of it ſhould ſeriouſly conſider whom they hereby reproach and *blaſpheme*, and "againſt whom they exalt their voice," *Iſa.* xxxvii. 23. even againſt the great GOD of heaven and earth, who "will not hold them guiltleſs." If by our words we ſhall be *condemned*, and by "corrupt communications the Spirit of GOD

is grieved," *Eph.* iv. 29. no kind of words can be of a more dangerous conſequence than thoſe we are ſpeaking about. As this evil practice is highly blameable in all, and admits of *no excuſe*; it is a kind of aggravation of the *guilt*, for the Poor to profane that holy Name of GOD, to affront Him by whoſe bountiful hand they are immediately ſed.

Some of theſe things are mentioned here, rather by way of caution, than as a direct or general accuſation: "I ſpeak not this to condemn you," 2 *Cor.* vii. 3. I would not add to the affliction of any of my *poor brethren*, by *laying to their charge* things they are not guilty of: There are ſeveral, I do not doubt, who "paſs the *time of their ſojourning here* in the true fear of GOD, looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt," *Titus* ii. 13.

I have now pointed out to you particularly ſome things you are to do, and what ye are to *forbear* doing; but you are to be careful to perform *all* other parts of your duty, to "abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good, and endeavour to adorn the doctrine of GOD your Saviour in all things." *Poverty*, or a low condition, does not ſet perſons at liberty from any part of their duty. As GOD "hath commanded no man to do wickedly, ſo neither hath he given any man licence to ſin," *Eccluſ* xv. 20. "There is no reſpect of perſons with the Lord," 2 *Chron.* xix. 7.

But "he that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong he hath done," (whether he be *bond* or free) *Col.* iii. 25. "We muſt *all* appear before the Judgment-ſeat of CHRIST." "I ſaw, ſays St. *John*, the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before GOD," *Rev.* xx. 12. The plea of *ignorance*, or not underſtanding their duty, will ſtand no one in any ſtead now, as we live under the light of the Goſpel; where "the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea," *Iſa.* xi. 9. And Wiſdom uttereth her voice publickly, threatening thoſe "who ſet at nought her counſel, and ſlight her reproofs, to laugh at their calamity when it cometh upon them," *Prov.* i. 20, *&c.* Thus you ſee what an uncomfortable condition all ſuch bring themſelves into, through a neglect and contempt of GOD's laws; and if perſons oppreſſed with poverty, live alſo wickedly, they cannot ſo much wonder at what befalls them, or reaſonably hope for any great ſhare of bleſſings from that God who "hateth all workers of iniquity." They may conſider alſo, that the more Religion prevails in the world, the greater regard will be paid to the Scripture; which is a *divine Charter*, confirming many grants and privileges to them, to make their condition in this life more comfortable, as was obſerved before. Now if any *human* laws ſuit our particular advantage, we ſhould act moſt unadviſedly by ſhewing a ſlight or contempt of them ourſelves, and by this means bringing them into diſeſteem, as much as we can, by our own careleſs practice.

But the moſt powerful argument to deter people from a wicked life, is the conſideration that ſuch a courſe will bring them into a ſtate of eternal miſery. If men are *caſt down* by worldly diſtreſs or affliction, and their *ſoul* upon that account *diſquieted within them*; though they may hope that their trouble can be of no laſting continuance, and that GOD "will lift up the light of his countenance" upon them; this *diſquieted* condition ſhould make them conſider, how diſmal the ſtate of thoſe muſt be, who are plunged in everlaſting ſorrow, to whom is *reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*. Which thought ſhould put them upon uſing their utmoſt endeavours to eſcape ſo dangerous a condition. The greateſt ſufferings in this life are as nothing in reſpect to the eternal miſery of the *Soul*. "Fear not them, ſays our Saviour, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear Him, who is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell," *Matt.* x. 28. or make them everlaſtingly *miſerable*. Who can think of that dreadful ſtate, without coming to a full reſolution to ſecure themſelves from it by a conſcientious diſcharge of their duty! Thus you ſee it is a matter of the greateſt importance to take care of the *Soul*, or provide for its eternal ſafety. "Incline your ear, and come unto me (ſaith the Lord) and your ſoul ſhall live," *Iſa.* lv. 3.

As GOD is the author of *eternal life*, and may give it upon what terms He pleaſes; if

He had *commanded* us to do ſome great and difficult thing, would it not have been our wiſdom and intereſt to have done it? How joyful ſhould we then be, and thankful to GOD, when we find the way to ſo much happineſs is ſmooth and pleaſant; that his Commandments are not *grievous*, but his Laws *holy*, and *juſt*, and *good*; and his ſervice *perfect freedom*, conducing to the preſent, as well as to the future good of mankind!

The poor, one might think, ſhould be more particularly careful to ſerve and pleaſe GOD, and to ſecure "that good part which ſhall never be taken away from them," *Luke* x. 42. ſo that after the travel which GOD hath given them to be "exerciſed withal, and the few and evil days of their pilgrimage are over, they may come to that reſt and inheritance which the Lord hath promiſed, and have their heavineſs turned into joy." And for their preſent comfort, we may juſt obſerve, that *Poverty* is ſo far from being any ſhame or diſgrace, that thoſe perſons are the proper objects of the love of GOD, and of all good men, who being under *Poverty*, or diſtreſs of any kind, ſupport themſelves by a holy confidence or religious truſt in GOD, and ſtand like a rock, unmoved, whilſt the ſwelling waves daſh againſt it: who conſider their condition as appointed them for wiſe ends by the ſupreme Diſpoſer of all things, and therefore behave with a ſuitable ſubmiſſion and conduct in that ſtation they are placed in; looking up with an eye of faith to thoſe "good things in a life to

ome, which GOD hath prepared for all them at love him; and going on with religious ourage through this *vale of miſery*, ſupported ith the proſpect of that *glorious Prize* which ſet before them; hoping that they ſhall ar-ve at laſt at the *heavenly Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any ore, but be led to living fountains of waters; here GOD ſhall make them drink of the river his pleaſures, and wipe away all tears from eir eyes." Such like thoughts keep their ſouls in patience; and having nothing, they ay yet be ſaid, with the Apoſtle, to poſſeſs l things," 2 *Cor.* vi. 10.

To conclude: Let the Goodneſs and Love GOD induce you to ſerve and pleaſe Him: et the Conſiderations of advancing by theſe eans your preſent and eternal comfort and tereſt, prevail upon you to live "ſoberly, ghteouſly, and godly in this preſent world;" d though you have no great ſhare in the *good ings* of it, yet remember, that you are in-led to a glorious and *eternal inheritance* in e world to come. If, with *Lazarus*, you ve taſted the *afflictions* or *evil things* of this e, this ſorrowful experience ſhould teach u, as it did him, to uſe your utmoſt dili-nce to obtain the everlaſting enjoyments of e next. And they who will not be won er to their duty by theſe hopes, have ſuf-ient reaſon to be deterred from ſin by the r of GOD's eternal wrath againſt all thoſe who do evil." As our Saviour, in his ſtate humiliation here on earth, vouchſafed par-

ticularly to own you for his *brethren*; let it be your ſtudy and *ambition* to keep up your intereſt and acquaintance with Him, by letting your "converſation be as becometh the Gospel:" ſo will he not be aſhamed of you; but when He ſhall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with Him, ye ſhall find yourſelves poſſeſſed of that honourable title, be included in the number of the bleſſed children of his heavenly Father, and become heirs of the kingdom, which is expreſsly promiſed to the Poor who are rich in faith." *James* ii. 5. As your parts in life are appointed you by divine Wiſdom and Providence, ſtrive that ye may *excel* in them, and by that means gain the approbation of the *Almighty*, and be advanced to everlaſting honour and glory. As GOD has *delivered* unto you talents, for the true uſe of which you muſt be accountable to Him, ſay not *in your hearts*, The Lord will *not require it*; (remembering the ſevere puniſhment of the *unprofitable ſervant*, who having received but *one talent*, hid it in the *earth*, and *gained* nothing with it, *Matt.* xxv. 25.) but let your duty and intereſt put you upon improving diligently what you have received; that your great Lord and Maſter, when he ſhall come to judge the world, and give to "every man according as his work ſhall be," may pronounce to each of you, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

A PRAYER *for the conſtant Uſe of the* POOR.

O Almighty LORD and moſt merciful Father, the GOD of all comfort and conſolation; who haſt promiſed in thy holy word to take the poor and needy under thy divine care and protection, and haſt made them partakers of many bleſſings in common with others; who haſt alſo of thy Goodneſs, not only implanted in human nature a diſpoſition to acts of pity and compaſſion, but haſt moreover expreſly commanded that thoſe who have it in their power *to do good*, ſhould be willing to diſtribute to ſuch as are in neceſſity; which duty thou haſt been pleaſed to enforce by many inviting promiſes and ſevere threatenings.—For thoſe evident manifeſtations of thy love to the Poor, they are bound to offer thee thanks and praiſe; but more eſpecially for the ſpiritual and eternal good things beſtowed upon them, as thou haſt breathed into them immortal ſouls, and made the way to everlaſting ſalvation as free and open to them as to others.

Grant, O LORD, that I, thy unworthy ſervant, may have a due ſenſe of thoſe great and ineſtimable benefits, and may make it my chief buſineſs to ſecure an eternal inheritance in heaven. Teach me to look upon this world as a place of trial, in order to fit and prepare me for a future and eternal ſtate; and enable me to bear with patience the troubles or ſufferings which may at any time befal me, and to

turn them to my real advantage. Seeing th this life is ſhort, and as nothing in reſpect t eternity, and that the ſufferings of it are no worthy to be compared with the glory whic ſhall be imparted hereafter to all good Chri tians; let this perſuaſion ſupport and comfort m in my ſojourning here on earth, and keep m ſtedfaſt and immoveable in my duty. Give m power to withſtand thoſe temptations which m condition makes me moſt liable to. Let no dif ficulties put me upon uſing diſhoneſty in m actions, or falſhood in my words: But endu me with wiſdom to fear thee, and look upo thy diſpleaſure as the greateſt of evils; ſeriouſl to conſider thou art a GOD of righteouſneſs an truth, who ſeeſt and knoweſt all things, even the very thoughts and intents of the heart, an will by no means clear the guilty. As we muſt alſo be called to an account for every idl or vain and wicked word, make me careful to ſet a watch over my mouth, ſo that no cor rupt communication may proceed out of it.

And ſeeing thou haſt for wiſe reaſons ap pointed that there ſhould be different ranks and degrees amongſt men, grant that I may behave myſelf in a fit and proper manner to thoſe who are placed above me; not be en vious at their condition, or murmur becauſe providence hath not allotted me a higher ſta tion; but be careful to do my duty in that ſtate of life unto which I am called, and by that means obtain thy divine approbation; to make a due improvement of whatever is com mitted to my truſt, remembering the ſevere

puniſhment of that ſervant, who having received but one talent, gained nothing with it.

Let the eye of thy moſt gracious Providence, O LORD, be evermore over me; give me ſuch things that thou ſeeſt moſt convenient for me, and teach me to truſt in thee at all times, and in whatever ſtate I am therewith to be content; to ſeek in the firſt place thy kingdom and righteouſneſs, hoping that the neceſſary ſupplies of life ſhall be added.

Make me alſo diligent in my buſineſs, working with my hands the thing which is good, and give a bleſſing to all my honeſt endeavours: And if things ſucceed not according to my deſires or expectations, grant that I may poſſeſs my ſoul in patience, and upon all occaſions ſay, *Thy will be done*; be careful to work out my eternal ſalvation; and endeavour to make myſelf eaſy here, with the expectation of being happy hereafter.

I offer unto thee alſo, O LORD, my hearty thanks for thy Goodneſs and Love to me; for my creation, preſervation, and all the bleſſings of this life; but above all, for thoſe great and ſpiritual benefits which I am intitled to through Chriſt my Saviour:—And as he became the Author of eternal ſalvation only to thoſe who obey him, and we muſt all, both *ſmall* and *great*, appear before his judgment-ſeat, to give an account of our actions, grant that I may be careful to ſecure my ſalvation, by adding a ſincere obedience to a true faith, and be enabled by the gracious aſſiſtance of thy holy Spirit to abhor that which is evil, and

cleave to that which is good; to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world, and adorn the doctrine of GOD my Saviour in all things.—In whoſe bleſſed name and words, I conclude my imperfect prayers, ſaying,

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

FINIS.

6.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING SINS of INFIRMITY AND WILFUL SINS; WITH ANOTHER OF RESTITUTION.

By the Right Reverend RICHARD KIDDER, D.D. Late Bishop of BATH and WELLS.

The SIXTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. F. and C. RIVINGTON, Booksellers to *The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*, St. *Paul's Church-yard*. 1788.

[Price 1½*d*. or 10*s*. a Hundred.]

TO THE

READER.

THE following Diſcourſe (in a plain and eaſy Stile, ſuited to the meaneſt Capacity) was compoſed chiefly for the poorer Inhabitants of the Dioceſe of *Bath* and *Wells*; amongſt whom the good BISHOP had deſigned to diſtribute great Numbers of them, had GOD ſpared him a few Weeks longer. The Copy was ſent to the Preſs a very ſhort Time before the late *dreadful Tempeſt*, which put a Period to the Author's Life.

May the good Inſtructions herein contained be effectual to excite in thee ſincere Repentance for all thy Sins paſt; and mayeſt thou ſtand always ready to quit this earthly Tabernacle, when, or in what Manner ſoever Death ſhall give thee the final Summons.

So prays thy Servant in CHRIST JESUS

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

INS of INFIRMITY, &c.

I INTEND to discourse of Sins of Weakness, or Infirmity, called in Scripture, *Errors*, and *secret Faults*, and of *wilful* or *presumptuous* ; as also of *Restitution*.

SECTION I.

And first, of *Sins of Weakness*; and that in the owing Method.

I. I shall consider the Nature of Sins of Weakness, or *Infirmity*, called *Errors*, and *secret Faults*, very often escaping even our own Observation.

II. The Effect of these Sins upon us, as to the Favour of God.

III. The Obligation that lies upon us, upon the Score of these Sins.

I. I shall give an Account of the Nature of Sins of Infirmity.

A Mistake here is of infinite Danger to the Souls of Men: because these Sins are consistent with the Favour of God and the State of Grace, which habitual, wilful, and presumptuous Sins are not: of which I purpose to discourse afterward. And if we repute these our wilful Sins but Infirmities, we shall think ourselves the Children of God, when we are not, and flatter ourselves to our eternal Ruin. On the other hand, if we shall repute our Sins of Weakness to be wilful Sins (as some good Christians have been prone to do) we shall fall into great Perplexities, and lose the Comfort and Peace of our Mind. So that this Matter is of great Moment, and ought to be stated with great Care.

And, for my better Proceeding in this weighty Argument, I will shew,

I. Negatively, What *is not* to be reputed a Sin of Weakness or Infirmity.

1*st*, He that sins with Reluctance and great Regret, must not therefore call his Sin a Sin of Infirmity. For it is not to be supposed, but the wilful and deliberate Sinner hath something of this. And as the Case may be, this is rather an Aggravation than an Excuse for the Sin. And generally speaking

ing, the vileſt (eſpecially at firſt) have ſomething of this. He that ſins without Remorſe, is one of the moſt hardened and hopeleſs. It is an Argument of a ſad State, when a Man can do ſhameful Things, and not be aſhamed. And he that ſins againſt theſe Reluctances, is in a very ſad Condition. This is not a *Spot* of God's Children, but a *Mark* of a Vaſſal of the Devil's Kingdom, and a Subject of the Kingdom of Darkneſs.

2*dly*, He that cuſtomarily ſins after Reſolutions of Amendment, muſt not call that a Sin of Infirmity; not though we ſhould ſuppoſe his Reſolution to be ſincere and hearty. For Reſolution is but a relative Duty, and only in order to the doing what we reſolve to do. Therefore the Performance is neceſſary; and if that does not follow, this bare Reſolution will not excuſe him from a wilful Sin. There are certain Reſolutions and Inclinations which ſerve to no Purpoſe, unleſs it be to condemn us. Among Men, ſuch Promiſes and Purpoſes pay no Debts and quit no Scores. For as a Man is not to be reputed a carnal Man, becauſe he hath about him ſome carnal Deſires and Inclinations, which he reſiſts, and ſuffers not to come into Act; ſo a Man is not to be accounted a ſpiritual Man, becauſe he hath ſome ineffectual Purpoſes and Reſolutions. It is he that *does Righteouſneſs* (not he that barely *reſolves* upon it) that *is righteous as God is righteous*. Good Wiſhes do not ſpeak a good Man; if they did, we ſhould be excuſed very eaſily from our univerſal Obedience.

3*dly*, Nor is that to be allowed to be a Sin of Infirmity, which is owing to another Sin or evil Cauſe, which we might have avoided. For at this rate, the greateſt Sins may be placed under this

Head. He that murders a Man in his drunken Fit, must not call that Murder an Infirmity; because his Drunkenness was a Fault that he ought to have avoided, and one Fault is not a sufficient Excuse for another. The same may be said of him that swears in his Anger, and blasphemes in his Fury and outrageous Passion. We commonly say, and very truly, "That the Cause of the Cause, is "the Cause of the Effect, or Thing caused." We are answerable for the Effects, when we are the Authors of the Cause of them. The greatness of the Temptation will not excuse our Compliance. That is an Argument that the Temptation weighs more with us, than the Laws of God and the Love of Righteousness; which is so far from being our Excuse, that it is our Fault.

4thly, Those must not be called Sins of Infirmity, which our corrupt Nature may be said to incline us to; for then we may repute all our filthy Debaucheries and crying Sins as Infirmities. The State of Nature is indeed a State of Infirmity, and our greatest Crimes proceed from our Infirmity, that is, natural or moral; but then this makes not our Excuse, but would entirely destroy all the Difference between Sins of Weakness and Wilful Sins.

I proceed to shew positively and affirmatively what Sins *are* to be reputed *Sins of Infirmity*.

Now Errors, or Sins of Infirmity, are such Sins as, generally speaking, are unavoidable. I say, generally speaking. For perhaps as to some of the Particulars under this Head, they are not so. For sometimes it is possible for us to avoid the Instance, and the Particular Slip or Fault, when yet, in the main, all Things considered, we can-

not be free from them altogether. Under this Head, I reckon,

1. Sins of Ignorance, whether of the *Law*, or of the *Tranſgreſſion*, where this Ignorance is not affected and criminal: for where that is the Caſe, there our Ignorance will not excuſe us, becauſe it is our Fault, and one Fault will not excuſe another. It is a very poſſible Thing, that a very innocent Man may, in ſome Caſes, be ignorant of the *Law*, and conſequently of the *Tranſgreſſion*: but then this Ignorance muſt be involuntary, unchoſen and unaffected. There are ſome Men that know not, nor will they underſtand; that ſhut their Eyes, and refuſe the Light: theſe are they that are willingly ignorant. There muſt be an honeſt Heart, and no culpable Negligence, before Ignorance can be pleaded in our Excuſe. Such an one, who is honeſt and induſtrious, may miſtake or forget the Law: ſuch an one St. *Paul* calls *weak in the Faith*. And there were many ſuch at the firſt planting of the Chriſtian Faith, who did not underſtand their Chriſtian Liberty, and Diſcharge from the Ordinances of *Moſes*. The Apoſtles, who had received a Command to *teach all Nations*, were ſome time before they could be prevailed with to admit the Gentiles into the Church of Chriſt. The Drunkard, and profane and profligate Sinner, cannot pretend to this Excuſe: his Sins cry aloud, and there is ſomething within him that bears Witneſs againſt theſe foul Offences.

Yet ſtill it is very certain, that a very good Man may be innocently ignorant of ſome part of his Duty, and that may happen from ſundry Cauſes and Occaſions. There are ſome Men who are truly good, that have a very mean Underſtanding,

which may be allowed to be an Infelicity, but no their Fault. Others have Capacity, but not the Means of Inſtruction, nor any Opportunity of having the Principles of Chriſtianity laid in them. But beſides all this,

1*ſt*, Something is to be allowed for Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion: and no doubt, God will allow much where the Prejudice is not faulty. It is of great Conſequence what we imbibe in our Youth. Theſe Principles clap a great Bias upon us, and the Way is too often blocked up againſt the Reception of the Truth; in ſuch a Caſe as this, we are very uncharitable, if we ſhould throw all ſuch Men among the *wilful* and *preſumptuous Sinners*.

2*dly*, The Law itſelf does not many times determine the meaſures and degrees of Virtue and Duty. We are commanded to give *Alms* of ſuch things as we have: and here we all ſtand obliged: but it does not tell how much we muſt give, nor what Proportion of our Income. This is not determined by the Law, nor can it well be, under the Variety of Circumſtances in which the Givers are placed. Again, We are commanded to be *temperate* in eating and drinking; but our Meaſures are not ſet down, nor can they be fixed, becauſe of that Variety of Mens Needs and Circumſtances; and therefore a good Man may perhaps exceed or fall ſhort, indulge himſelf too much, or too little. If it be ſaid, that Virtue conſiſts in the middle, yet every good Man may not be able preciſely to determine that matter. We are commanded to *pray*, but we are not told how often in a Day, and what proportion of Time we are to ſpend at once. For where it is ſaid, "That we "muſt pray always and without ceaſing," we very

wel

well know, that those Expressions cannot be understood in the strictest Sense of the Letter, because we are by other Laws obliged to some other things, and it is impossible to practise it in the most rigorous and extended Sense.

3*dly*, Some Laws have their Exceptions either necessarily implied, or expressed, and Men are to govern themselves accordingly. We are commanded to "give to every Man that asketh." But here it must be supposed, that he who is asked hath somewhat to give, and that he doth not want it more than he that asketh; and after all, if he cannot give to all, yet many times it is greater Charity to give to him that asketh not. We are obliged *to obey our Governors and Parents*; but yet we must not do it where they command what God hath forbid, or forbid what God hath commanded. This was frequently the Case under the Law of *Moses*; that required, "That a Man should Marry "his Brother's Widow, and raise up Seed unto his "Brother." And after all, some Men could not do this; *e. gr.* We will suppose the deceased Person Brother to the High Priest, it could not be lawful for him to marry his brother's Widow, because by the Law he was forbid to marry any Widow, as the Jews well observe [*Jevamoth*, cap. 2. 3.] and therefore he must be an excepted Person. Again, we will suppose two Brothers to marry two Sisters, one Brother dies and leaves a Widow, yet may not the surviving Brother marry that Widow, because it is expresly forbidden by another Law to take to Wife his Wife's Sister. A great many other Cases, doubtless, might be given, in which a very good Man might mistake his Rule very innocently, and as innocently go astray from it.

4*thly*, There are ſome Things in which our Ru does not particularly direct us. God's Laws r many times in general Terms, without deſcendi to Definitions and Specialities. Thus the La about Temperance and againſt Covetouſneſs d not deſcend to ſtrict Definitions, and all the Spe cialities contained under them. And ſo as to Ma ters of Recreations and Divertiſements, a goo Man may miſtake, not being able to apply gener Laws to the particular Occaſions and Emergenci of Life; and may, without Loſs of God's Favou take a greater Liberty than a wiſer Man wou have taken.

5*thly*, Again, a good Man may innocently ru into ſome ſort of Extreme. For ſometimes ſo it i that the Sin lies in the Degree; and where th Thing is lawful, the Exceſs is faulty and culpable

And the juſt and ſtrict Limits of Virtue and Vic are ſometimes not very diſcernable. It is not ea to ſet out the Boundaries between Truth and Fal hood, which often dwell upon the Skirts of eac other. And this is often the Caſe between Virtu and Vice. In many Caſes we are prone to ru into ſome Exceſs; *v. gr.* to exceed in Mirth, eve then when it is not only lawful, but expedient t rejoice; or in our Grief, when it is lawful and ſea ſonable to mourn. We may in ſome Caſes be to moroſe, and too ſcrupulous; or, on the other hand be too gay and complaiſant. And, as the Ca may be, we may be either too zealous or elſe to remiſs. Upon theſe Accounts the juſteſt Man upo Earth may err, and this through an Ignorance tha is not culpable.

2. Sin

2. Sins of Surreption or Surprize, when we have not time to conſider, and deliberate, and weigh the Thing that is propounded to us. The upper Soul or Underſtanding of a Man does not move the Will or lower Faculties, as a Clock or Watch is moved, where one Wheel that is ſet on moving, moves all the reſt. For the lower Powers of the Soul may move, when the upper do not inform and direct. A ſudden Fear or Fright may prevail in a Moment, and ſet the lower Powers on work, before the Underſtanding hath Time to give Advice and Information. In this Caſe, a Man is rather hurried, than led or ſeduced; and the Action is in Truth involuntary: for where he hath not time to think, it cannot be called the Action of the Man: What he does in this Caſe, is not his Fault, nor will be no more imputed to him, than the Actions of Madmen or of Idiots will be charged upon them.

3. Miſtakes and Errors which we are guilty of through Forgetfulneſs and Inadvertency, and want of a more ſtrict and continual Watch and Guard upon ourſelves; Theſe are not wilful and deliberate; and though they are Sins, yet when they are againſt the habitual Inclination and Choice of the Man, they are not preſumptuous Sins. It is not to be ſuppoſed, in this State of Weakneſs in which we now are, that we ſhould be always intent and awake. The *Wiſe Virgins*, that yet had *Oil in their Lamps*, whilſt the Bridegroom tarried, *ſlumbered and ſlept*. And "where the Spirit is "willing, yet the Fleſh is weak."

If, after all, any Man ſhould call for a Catalogue of thoſe Sins which are to be reputed Sins of Weakneſs, he would be very unreaſonable. Such

a Catalogue cannot be given in. The Reason is plain: Because those very Sins which in some Men, and in some Cases, are but Sins of Infirmity, in other Men, and in other Circumstances, may be truly called wilful Sins. An Infirmity indulged and allowed, will grow up to the Stature of a wilful Sin. And Sins of Infirmity and wilfulness are such, many times, with respect to the Sinner. It is a certain Truth, that he that committeth the greatest Sin, is not always the greatest Sinner. And one Man may be a wilful Sinner, in that very Instance in which another is guilty only of an Infirmity. For Mens Sin and Guilt swell or grow less according to the Circumstances which do attend them. That may be wilful in one Man, which in another is but Surreption and Surprise. It is the Will God looks at; and as it consents or rejects, the Sin, and the Sinner, will be esteemed in the Sight of God, who alone knows the Hearts.

But as the Papists require us to give in a Catalogue of Fundamentals, so perhaps some may urge us still to give in a Catalogue of these Sins, though it be as unreasonable on one side, as on the other, to make such a Demand; yet I think it will be no hard Matter to give some Exemplifications of the Sins of Infirmity, which I am now treating upon.

E. gr. Such are evil Thoughts, springing indeed from an evil Temper and bad Inclination, but not consented to.

Wandering or Drowsiness in Prayer, and other parts of Divine Worship, when we strive against it: for when it seizes our Will, and gains our Consent, it is a wilful Sin.

Evil

Evil Emotions and Propenſions, that are forthwith retracted and ſtifled. Theſe may be allowed to be Sins, but they are but Sins of Infirmity and Weakneſs. For as no Man is to be accounted an holy and ſpiritual Man, becauſe he hath, now and then good Wiſhes and ſpiritual Deſires, if he proceed no farther; ſo he is not to be reputed a carnal Man, or out of the Favour of God and the State of Salvation, if he have ſome evil Motions ſpringing up in his Mind, if he ſtifle and ſuppreſs them. I next proceed to conſider,

II. The Effect of theſe Sins, as to the Favour of God and the State of Grace. That is, to inquire whether theſe Sins do put us out of God's Favour and the State of Grace: or whether if a Man die, that is not quite freed from theſe Sins, he may be ſaved.

Now that theſe Sins are conſiſtent with the Favour of God and the State of Grace, will appear from the following Particulars.

1*ſt*, From their Unavoidableneſs: for ſo, in the main, they are. It is not poſſible for a Man to be always upon the Stretch; the wiſeſt and beſt of Men may be miſtaken or ſurpriſed in this World of Hurry, and conſequently be guilty of Slips and Infirmities. But it is by no means to be believed, that we ſhould loſe God's Favour for thoſe things which it was impoſſible for us to help: we may as well ſuppoſe we ſhall loſe God's Favour barely becauſe we are Men, as for thoſe Infirmities which are the inſeparable Attendants upon human Nature.

2*dly*,

2*dly*, They are alſo involuntary, and do not import Malice or full conſent, and will therefore not condemn us. They are not choſen, not ſo much as in their Cauſes, as I have explained this Matter before, and therefore cannot denominate a Man an ill Man. It is here as in ſome other Caſes; as a Man of good Skill and Strength, in wreſtling with one of leſs, may yet fall, becauſe the Ground is ſlippery, or through ſome other Accident; and ſo may the beſt Horſeman, upon a fiery and ſtarting Horſe. If he ſlip or fall, it is not his Fault, but his Misfortune only; it is not his Choice in the leaſt. Here is nothing imputable to the Man, becauſe there is no Choice in the Caſe.

3*dly*, The holieſt Men in all Ages, and the moſt celebrated in all Ages of the Church, have been overtaken with them, and yet have not been ſuppoſed to have been deprived of God's Favour, and blotted out of the Book of Life. *Moſes* himſelf, the meekeſt and one of the beſt Men upon Earth, yet once "ſpake unadviſedly with his Lips." *Noah*, a perfect Man, and a great Preacher of Righteouſneſs, was once ſurpriſed and overcome by the Blood of the Grape. *Job* "was a Man perfect and "upright, that *feared God*, and *eſchewed Evil*, and he thought he had Cauſe to ſay, "I abhor my-"ſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes," *Job* xlii. 6. *David* was a Man very remarkable for his great Faith and Hope in God, and yet he ſays, "I "have ſaid in my Haſte, I am cut off from before "thine Eyes," *Pſal.* xxxi. 28. Again, *Zacharias* was "righteous before God, walking in all the "Commandments of the Lord blameleſs," *Luke* i. 2, 18, 20. and yet he betrayed ſome Infirmity in his Faith, and was ſtruck dumb upon it. The holieſt

holieſt Men have their Weakneſſes and Imperfections.

4*thly*, The Scripture aſſures us, that the beſt of Men are not free from theſe Infirmities, "There "is not a juſt Man upon Earth, that doth Good "and ſinneth not." Again, "Who can ſay that "I have made my Heart clean, and am pure from "my Sin?" *Eccles.* vii. 20. *Prov.* xx. 9. Even under the Law, cleanſing and Atonement were allowed for Sins of Ignorance; and we are not freed from them under the Goſpel.

It is true indeed, "He that is born of God doth "not commit Sin," 1 *John* iii. 9. ὲ ποιεῖ, he does not practiſe nor live in wilful Sins; that is certainly the meaning of that Place: and this Senſe is reconcileable with what is ſaid of Sins of Weakneſs, chap. i. 8. no man being quite free from them.

St. *James* ſuppoſeth that a Brother may "err "from the Truth; and St. *Paul*, that he may be "overtaken with a Fault," *James* v. 19. Gal. vi. 1. but do not give him up for loſt upon this Account: nay, their Words rather imply the contrary. We are taught in our daily Prayer to aſk Forgiveneſs of our Sins, which ſure we need not do, if we were free from Errors.

5*thly*, This will be out of Diſpute, if we conſider the Nature of God, as he is repreſented to us in the holy Scriptures. He is repreſented as good and merciful, as having the Compaſſions of a Father, and the Bowels of a Mother, and as one who deſires not the Death, but Converſion of a Sinner. And in the New Teſtament he is called *Love*, his Kindneſs is repreſented as greater than

than that of earthly Parents, and yet an earthly Parent is not wont to abdicate or disinherit a Child that studies to please him, though he should sometime mistake his Commands, or be overtaken with a Fault.

I add, that if the Scriptures were silent, our Experience would not. We have all largely tasted of the Richness of his Goodness and Forbearance, and can say, that "it is of his Mercy that we are "not consumed."

6thly, If we consider the Temper of the Gospel, and Nature of the new Covenant of Grace, we shall be farther confirmed in this Truth. I cannot possibly see how it could be called a new Covenant, or *Covenant of Grace* at all, if it did not make Allowance for Sins that are unavoidable and involuntary. Christ is called *the Desire of all Nations*, that is, the most desirable Blessing that could happen to them; and so indeed he was. His Birth is proclaimed with *Glory to God*, and with *Good-will towards Men*, as good Tidings to Mankind, or "Tidings of great Joy which shall be to all People," *Luke* ii. 10. But alas! what Joy could there be in all this, if, after all, there were no Hope left for us under our unavoidable Slips and Failures? Who could hope or rejoice if there were no Remedy in this Case, if nothing short of a sinless Obedience could secure our Souls? We should then have remained still in a State of Bondage and Death. Christ would have died in vain: had died in vain, had he not procured Pardon for unavoidable Sins; and "our Preaching, and your Faith and Hope, "would have been in vain." But we are sure there is great Hope for the Sincere, though they have

have their Failures, and that Sincerity is the Perfection of a Chriſtian.

III. I proceed now to the Obligation which lies upon us on the Score of theſe Sins. You may take your Obligation in the following Particulars.

1. You are obliged to a Sorrow even for theſe Sins. This will be a good Evidence that they are not wilful. For though they are upon the main unavoidable, yet it is fit we ſhould be ſorry for them. Becauſe they urge the Defect of Holineſs: and though, generally ſpeaking, we cannot avoid them altogether, yet if we come to particular Inſtances, there are ſome that a more exact Care and Watchfulneſs might have prevented. Who is there among us that does his utmoſt? and if he does not, (and it is in his Power to do that) he is obnoxious to the Juſtice of God, and conſequently obliged to Repentance for his Neglect.

I do not mean here by Repentance, a particular one, ſuch as preſumptuous Sins require; nor do I mean by it a perfect maſtering of all theſe Sins for the future, which in all other Caſes is required. But this Caſe will not admit of ſuch a Repentance; for theſe Sins are often unknown, and therefore called *ſecret* Faults; and beſides, generally ſpeaking, they are unavoidable alſo.

All that can be meant by Repentance is this, namely, an hearty Sorrow for what we know, with a great Care to avoid them, and a general Confeſſion and Sorrow for what we do not underſtand. The Pſalmiſt, who, in another Caſe, ſhews a very particular Repentance, *Pſal.* li. in this Caſe prays, "Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Faults."

Though

Though in all other Caſes there be infi
Danger in a general Repentance, and we are ne
ſafe when we repent not particularly, yet is
that the Caſe before us now.

2. Theſe Sins oblige us to a very great C
that we do not wilfully offend; by doing of th
we ſhall ſhew that theſe Sins were involunta
We are but Hypocrites, and out of God's Favo
when we bewail our Infirmities, and indulge o
ſelves in wilful Sins. We mock God in th
Caſe, when we "ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow
Camel." This was the Jewiſh Hypocriſy, w
were afraid of a legal Defilement, and allow
themſelves in groſs Immoralities.

3. We are obliged to confeſs them, as fa
they come to our Knowledge, and to beg for Go
Pardon, in the Mediation and for the Sake of Je
Chriſt, 1 *John* i. 9. chap. ii. 1, 2, 9. Under t
Law of *Moſes*, he that had committed a Sin of I
norance, had a Sacrifice appointed; and there w
ſome continual ones, as the daily Offerings for t
Errors of the whole Congregation. Theſe w
but Types and Shadows of the Death of Chri
by whoſe Blood we are cleanſed and purged.

4. In order to the ſecuring ourſelves a Pard
for theſe Failures, we muſt forgive one anothe
This is God's Appointment, *Matt.* vi. 14. L
vi. 36. And all Acts of Mercy, ſuch as Givi
and Forgiving, have a Tendency this Way. W
muſt ſhew Mercy, as we would receive it: o
Intereſt and our Duty obliges us to it.

A DI

A DISCOURSE OF WILFUL SINS.

SECTION II.

NEXT proceed to consider those which are *wilful* or *presumptuous Sins*. Here I shall consider,

I. The Nature of these wilful or presumptuous Sins.

II. The Effect of them, as to the State of Grace, and Favour of God.

III. The Obligation which lies upon us on the Score of these Sins.

I. I enquire into the Nature of these wilful or presumptuous Sins.

I shall

I ſhall need ſay the leſs, becauſe I have largely diſcourſed of the Nature of *Sins of Weakneſs*, to which theſe Sins are oppoſed, and called *preſumptuous*, and ſaid to be committed with an high hand, and a Contempt of the Law, *Deut.* xvii. 12, 13. *Numb.* xv. 30. *Heb.* x. 28. Theſe are Sins of a higher Strain, and import a far greater Guilt, and a Hazard of a future State.

Two Things are required to make a Sin wilful or preſumptuous.

1. That it be a Sin againſt Knowledge. "To "him that knows to do Good, and doth it not, to "him it is Sin." *James* iv. 17. Our Saviour tells the Phariſees, "If ye were blind, ye ſhould have "no Sin: but now you ſay, We ſee: therefore "your Sin remaineth," *John* ix. 41. This is the great Aggravation of our Fault, and that which leaves us without Excuſe, or any Shadow of it, *Luke* xii. 47. He that ſins againſt Conſcience, is turned Rebel to Heaven. His Guilt increaſeth to the greateſt Bulk and Stature.

2. That it be committed after Conſideration; this makes it a *deliberate* Sin. It is poſſible, that a Man that is not ignorant, may yet be ſurpriſed, and not have time to conſider. The moſt watchful Man is not always awake. The ſame Sin may be in one a *wilful* Sin, which in another is but a Sin of *Infirmity*. Not that God is a Reſpecter of Perſons, but becauſe one Man ſins againſt a clear Light, and upon Deliberation, when another is ſurpriſed. So it is ſometimes, we debate the Matter, our Fleſh ſuggeſts and pleads, and ſo does our Conſcience, and we attend to both of them. One lays before us the Law, the fatal Effects of the Sin.

The

The other tempts us with Eaſe and Profit, and the pleaſant Fruit. In this Caſe the Sinner offends at the higheſt Rate; his Sin is wilful in the very higheſt Degree of all.

Nor are we to be excuſed from this higheſt Guilt in ſome Caſes, where we do not, and are not able actually to conſider. For if this Inability ſprings from ourſelves, and be of our own making, the Caſe and the Guilt is ſtill the ſame. The Action, which in the ſpecial inſtance is involuntary, may yet be voluntary in the Cauſe. We have a famous Story among the Jewiſh Writers to my preſent Purpoſe. "A certain King entertained ſome Jews, "and endeavoured to debauch them: He preſſed "them either to drink freely of his Wine, or to "eat Swines Fleſh, or to commit Lewdneſs with "Gentile Women. Upon Deliberation, they "choſe the former, but then under that Exceſs "committed the other two, and were conſe-"quently guilty of all." We are accountable for the Effects of our wilful Drunkenneſs and Rage. For though we conſider not, yet that is our Fault, and cannot therefore be our Excuſe. Again, where the Sin proceeds from an Habit of our own voluntary creating, or from our wilful Neglect of the Means of preſerving ourſelves, we are in theſe and ſuch Caſes chargeable with wilful Sin.

II. I conſider the Effect of theſe Sins as to the State of Grace, and the Favour of God.

Theſe Sins do certainly caſt Men into God's Diſfavour, they wound and waſte the Conſcience, and ſhake our better State, and ſap our well-grounded Hopes of Eternal Life. Theſe Sins expoſe Men to God's Wrath, and (if true Repentance do

do not prevent) consign them to eternal Death. These are not "the Spots of God's Children," as is manifest from 1 *John* iii. 4. vi. 9. "Whosoever is "born of God doth not commit Sin." Such a Man belongs to another Kingdom. Ver. 8. "He "that committeth Sin is of the Devil." If we compare this Place with Chap. i. 8, 9. and Chap. ii. 1, 2. it is plain that St. *John* speaks of the wilful Sinner, which is said to *commit Sin*, and to walk in *Darkness*; whereas the other Places, Chap. iii. speak of Sins of *Weakness*, of *Surreption*, and *Surprize*. And however the wilful Sinner may flatter himself, he is in a state of Damnation at present, in a Separation from God, and in the broad Road that leads to eternal Death and Destruction.

This Sin speaks a Contempt of God, and of his Laws, and greatly hazards our eternal Salvation. "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received "the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no "more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful "looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, "which shall devour the Adversaries," *Heb.* x. 26. A Sin of this Size admitted of no Sacrifice under the Law of *Moses*, but left Men obnoxious to Death, or the divine Excision. "How much "more shall he be punished, who hath trodden "under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted "the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was "sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done De-"spight unto the Spirit of Grace? The Lord shall "judge his people." And we shall find it a "fear-"ful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living "God." Of such a Sinner the Words of St. *James* are meant; "Whosoever shall keep the whole "Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty "of all," *James* ii. 10. The Reason is plain, namely,

mely, becauſe he contemns the Authority upon hich the Whole ſtands.

Theſe Sins defeat the End of Chriſt's Appearce, the Virtue of his Blood, and Efficacy of his tonement, 1 *John* iii. 8. Till we turn to God by true Repentance, we are in a State of great anger. I cannot ſay that we are without Hope, or will I ſuppoſe ſuch an Interciſion of our Juſtiation, as infers God's reverſing his former Parn, and Acts of Grace, as to thoſe Sins which ere before repented of and forſaken. We have o reaſon to affirm ſuch Sinner without all Hope: od forbid. He does not preſently diſinherit ſuch Sinner. But if ſuch a Sinner die before he reents, he dies in his Sins, and muſt lie down in *verlaſting Burnings.*

For we have no Cauſe to believe that God does ſtify a Sinner all at once, ſo as not only to forgive hat Sins are paſt and repented of, but alſo thoſe hich are to come. This would ſuppoſe a Sin rgiven before it is committed, and conſequently efore it is repented of. We may as reaſonably ppoſe a Sinner juſtified before he is born, as that is Sin is forgiven before it is committed.

However we may perplex ourſelves in this Matr, yet it is a certain Truth, that our Sanctificaon and Juſtification muſt run parallel together. hen the Scripture ſays, that God does juſtify he *ungodly*; the Word *ungodly* only denotes what heſe Men ſometimes had been, and not what they re when God is ſaid to juſtify them. Elſe we uſt ſuppoſe, that God would clear the Guilty. t. *Paul* lets us know, that the "Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God," 1 *Cor.* vi. 9–11.

He

He reckons up those who shall not, namely, *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers*, &c. He adds, "and "such were some of you; but ye are washed, but "ye are sanctified, but ye are justified," &c. We are God's Favourites, as long as we do his Will; and *the Friends of Christ*, as long as *we obey him*. Here is no Change in God, nor are his Works and Counsels chargeable with any such Thing. The Change is in us: by doing well or ill we change our State, God changeth not. He is always the same, pleased with the Holy and Penitent, and an Enemy to the Wicked and Obstinate. And those whom he owns whilst they do well, he disclaims when they wilfully offend him. God was wont when he spake of *Israel*, to say, *My People*; but when they fell into Idolatry, he altered his Stile: "The Lord said unto *Moses*, Go, get thee down, "for *thy People*, which thou broughtest out of the "Land of *Egypt*, have corrupted themselves," *Exod.* xxxii. 7. And thus our Saviour, speaking of those who would not forgive their Brethren; "So likewise shall *my* heavenly Father (not *yours* any longer) "do also unto you, if you from your "Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their "Trespasses," *Matt.* xviii. 35.

III. I proceed now to consider the Obligation which lies upon us, on the Score of these wilful Sins. I mean toward the procuring our Pardon, and restoring us to the State of Grace, and to the Favour of God.

In this Sin two Things are to be separately considered. First, The Offence against God. And, secondly, The Injury or Damage done to our Neighbour. With respect to the first, we are obliged to Repentance. To the second, to

Restitution

ſtitution and Amends; and where there hath en an Enmity, to Reconciliation.

1. We are obliged to Repentance, and have eat Cauſe to bleſs God that we are admitted to cond Thoughts. That where we cannot pretend nocence, our Repentance is accepted. This is Covenant of *Grace* and *Mercy*; "Repentance and Remiſſi n of Sins is preached in Chriſt's Name:" e "came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance," *Luke* xxiv. 47. This was the eat Doctrine of Chriſt, of *John* the Baptiſt, and the Apoſtles. This ſpeaks the Grace and Mercy the Goſpel; we are not rigorouſly bound up by r Guilt; but he that *confeſſeth* and *forſaketh his n*, ſhall be pardoned.

Here I ſhall, (1.) ſpeak ſomething in general of e Nature of Repentance; and, (2.) ſhew what nd of Repentance is required, in order to reſtore e wilful Sinner to God's Favour.

Firſt, I ſhall ſpeak ſomething in general of the ature of Repentance. I fear nothing is more mmon, and I am ſure nothing is more danger- s, than a Miſtake in this Matter.

It imports more than giving God good Words d ourſelves evil; more than confeſſing our Sins, d great Sorrow upon the Account of them. *udas* is ſaid to have repented. He was full of rrow and Remorſe: he confeſſed he had "be- trayed innocent Blood:" he brought back the thirty Pieces of Silver," and returned them in e Temple; and yet, after all, he was "the Son of Perdition, and it had been better that he had never been born." It is hard ſometimes to know

whence our Sorrow grows, whether it be the Fault or the Detection, the Sin or the Punishment, that does produce it. Perhaps we sorrow, not because we have been wicked, but because God is just, and our Iniquity hath found us out. We know not also whither it will lead us, whether to a godly Care, or to Desperation. It is not all Sorrow that is of a godly Sort, nor all Repentance that is to Salvation.

Repentance imports two Things:

1*st*. A Change of *Mind* or Principle. A true Penitent judges and wills otherwise than he did. His Soul hath a new Bias put upon it. He judges Sin the greatest of Evils, as in truth it is, and Holiness the greatest Perfection of human Nature. He values the Favour of God above all. The Desires and Bent of his Soul are after God and spiritual Things.

2*dly*, A Change of *Life*, an after Care not to offend. He forsakes his Way as well as his Thoughts. *Isai*. lv. This is expressed at large by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, chap. xviii. Our Faith and Repentance must be justified by Works; we must "bring forth "Fruits meet for Repentance." *Matt*. iii. 8. Judas was stifled with Sorrow, but far from Repentance. Faith and Repentance are empty Names, without good Works. The Devils believe and tremble also.

Thus much of the general Nature of Repentance. I proceed,

Secondly, To shew what kind of Repentance is required toward the restoring the wilful Sinner to God's Favour.

1. O

1. Our Repentance must be *particular*: A general one will not serve. Where the Sin is known, it must be particularly bewailed and cast out. It must be as it was with the Jews in searching for Leaven; they cast away all which they found, and solemnly execrated what they could not find. The Psalmist prays, "Cleanse thou me from my secret "Faults:" This is a general Confession, and it is as much as the Case would bear. But of his wilful Sin he makes a particular Confession. "Deliver "me from Blood-guiltiness, O GOD." *Psal.* li. 14. St. *Paul* did not only call himself the "chief of "Sinners," but confessed his particular Sins, namely, that he "was a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, "and Injurious," 1 *Tim.* i. 13, 15. It was provided for in the Law of *Moses*, the Sacrifice without this would not make Atonement: "He shall "confess that he sinned in that thing." *Lev.* v. 5. The Jews lay before us the Form of Words which, by their Constitutions, the Sinner was to use; into which he was obliged to insert his particular Sin. This they call ידוּי דברים a *Formal Confession*; without which, and Repentance, they taught, the Sacrifice would not make an Atonement. And where the Sinner had been injurious to his Neighbour, he was obliged to confess, as well as make Restitution. *Numb.* v. 6, 7.

2. Our Repentance must be very *serious*, and bear some Proportion to our Sin. It must be accompanied with an inward Sorrow, Shame, and Pain. *Peter* denied his Lord: his Sin was wilful, and greatly aggravated. His Sin was not only against Light and Knowledge, but after Warning, and his avowed Profession of Constancy; it was after many Favours and great Distinctions; he was

taken into the Apoſtleſhip, and taken up into the Mount upon Chriſt's Transfiguration; he was made from an ordinary Fiſherman, to be "a Fiſher "of Men;" his Wife's Mother had been reſtored by a Miracle; he had the honour of ſeeing our Lord's Miracles, and hearing his Sermons. His Temptation was ſmall; he was charged by a ſilly Maid, by mean and incompetent Witneſſes; beſides, he perſiſted in his Sin, and increaſed it; he repeated his Sin, and to his Inconſtancy and Want of Truth, he added Curſing and Swearing. In a Word, his Sin was complicated and heinous, and ſure his Repentance was proportionate. The Text ſays, he "wept bitterly." *Quantum malum Chriſtus neganda commiſerit, plorando monſtravit.* AUGUST. A few Tears and a ſmall Sorrow will not ſerve where the Crime is ſo great.

3. Our Repentance muſt be attended with the *forſaking* our Sin. St. *Peter*, that denied his Lord, did ſhew the greateſt Conſtancy and Boldneſs afterward, even under the greateſt Danger, as we find in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. This is to be ſaid of Repentance for wilful Sins. For Sins of Weakneſs, which, generally ſpeaking, are unavoidable, the Caſe is otherwiſe. But wilful Sins muſt be forſaken, or elſe we cannot have the Grace or Benefit of Repentance.

4. Our Repentance muſt be ſpeedy, or elſe we cannot be ſafe. A wilful Sin gives our Souls a mortal Wound. We never delay our Remedy, when this happens to our Bodies. Our Life is uncertain, and as we always tread on the Borders of Death, ſo in this Condition we do on the Borders of Hell. And were we ſure of Life, we

cannot

annot be ſure of the Grace of Repentance. If e delay it, we ſhall ſoon be hardened, and our anger increaſeth with our Delay. If Repentnce be good and profitable, it will be beſt to ſe it preſently; and if it were not, we need not repent at all. And it is much to be feared, at he that continues in ſuch a Sin, will die in alſo.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

RESTITUTION.

SECTION III.

I Proceed to consider our Obligation where our wilful Sin is not only an Offence against God, but also a Wrong and Injury to our Neighbour. What are we to do in this Case in order to our Pardon?

II. In this Case we are obliged to make *Restitution* and *Amends*. This is no less necessary towards our Pardon, than *Repentance* towards God. This is agreed among all Divines. We are obliged in Justice to do this; and if we are not willing, we are in a State of Damnation. If he that borrows and bargains, be bound to pay, and make good his Contract; he that steals or detains what is another's, must needs be bound. We find the Repentance of a wicked Man described, "by re-"storing the Pledge, and giving again what he "hath robbed," *Ezek.* xxxiii. 15. Upon *Zacchæus* his declaring his Charity, and purpose of ample

Reſtitution, our Saviour ſaid to him, "This Day "is Salvation come to thy Houſe," *Luke* xix. 8.

He that is not willing to make Reſtitution, cannot be a penitent. He is ſo far from it, that he loves his Sin, when he hugs the Fruit of it. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that he choſe the Sin for its own Sake at firſt, but for the Profit or Advantage of it. He that detains what is another's, is as unjuſt as he that ſteals. The greateſt Pretence of Sorrow and Regret, without Reſtitution, will avail us nothing, if it be in our power to reſtore. Our Religion ſtrictly obligeth to this; "To render to "every Man his Due," *Rom.* xiii. 7, 8. It was alſo provided for in the Law of *Moſes*, where ſeveral Rules are given in this Matter, *Exod.* xxii. 1. *Lev.* v. 16. and chap. vi. 5. *Numb.* v. 6—8. of which Variety it were not hard to give a clear Account, were it ſo that it would not be too great a Digreſſion in this Place. In ſome Caſes the Offender was obliged to reſtore ſeveral Fold: In other Caſes to add a fifth part, even where the Fault was ignorantly committed; but in all Caſes it was abſolutely neceſſary, and Confeſſion and Sacrifice could not procure Pardon without it. And where the injured Perſon was not to be found, that Law directs what is to be done, *Numb.* v. 8. But of this Matter enough.

I ſhall, however, in this weighty Caſe, add ſome Rules for the better governing ourſelves, and that in the following Particulars.

1. That when I ſpeak of Reſtitution, and the Neceſſity of it, I muſt be underſtood of all Injuries whatſoever. We may wrong our Brother ſeveral Ways, and are obliged to make Reſtitution in all ſuch

ſuch Caſes. He does not only wrong his Neighbour who robs him of his Money or other Goods, or defrauds him of his Bargain; who over-reacheth him in Contract, and detains his Dues; not only he that wounds his Body, but he that leſſens his Fame, that grieves him without a Cauſe, that robs him of his Innocence or his Peace. Theſe laſt are ſo far from being no Injuries, that indeed they are the greateſt, though the moſt common, and I fear the leaſt laid to the Heart.

2. We are not only chargeable with repairing the Wrong which we have done with our own Hand, but with that alſo which we were the firſt Cauſe of; or that we have procured to be done, or which we have not, upon due Notice, prevented: we are guilty when we procure others to do the Wrong, or do not hinder it when we can, and when we ought. He that hinders another's Charity to a poor Man, by Fraud or any evil Art, is bound to make him Reſtitution. Again, We are chargeable with all that Wrong of which we are the firſt and voluntary Cauſe. For though the Conſequence were not deſigned by us, yet if we were voluntary as the firſt Cauſe, we are juſtly chargeable with the conſequent Miſchief. He that ſets on Fire his Neighbour's Stack of Corn, and it takes hold of his Houſe, is chargeable with the whole Damage, becauſe it was a wilful Sin in the Beginning.

3. That in all theſe Caſes a Man is not obliged beyond what he is able to do. My Meaning is plainly this, that his future Happineſs does not depend upon it, if he be otherwiſe a true Penitent. He is obliged always to do his utmoſt, and then his ſincere Repentance will be accepted.

There are several Cases in which a full Restitution and Reparation of the Wrong is not possible; as for Example, though a man may be able to pay his Debts, to restore the Pledge, and what he hath robbed: yet the Wrong by Murder and Uncleanness is not to be repaired in Specie, and it is too often next to impossible to repair the Wrong done by Slander.

Again, The Person injured is perhaps deceased, or in a far Country, and it is uncertain whether he be dead or alive. And if dead, yet perhaps he hath no Heirs or Relatives in being, or none that can fairly pretend a Right.

Or perhaps a Man hath lived in a continual Course of Cheating in his Way of Trade and Traffick. And then it is in great Measure impossible to know whom he hath wronged; and in that Case he is not able to make full and just Restitution.

Or it may be, he that hath done the Wrong is grown poor, and utterly unable to make Amends. This happens frequently: For it is seldom that Injustice prospers long. And yet it is hard to say, that if such a Man be a true Penitent, that yet there is no Hope of Salvation left him. I add, therefore,

4. That in all such Cases, a Man is still obliged to do his utmost, and to restore as far as he is able, or as the Nature of the Case will bear.—And, to apply it to the Cases above-named,

He

He that cannot reſtore the Man to Life whom he hath killed, may yet be able to maintain his Family, or to do ſo much towards it as the Dead may be preſumed to have been able to do, had he been Living; and ſo much he is obliged to do if he be able. He that cannot reſtore that Chaſtity and Innocence which he hath robbed and violated, yet he is obliged, if he be able, to make all other Amends which the Caſe will bear. He is bound to provide for the Growth of his Folly: and to marry (in caſe of ſimple Fornication) or endow the injured Perſon, or make ſuch a pecuniary Recompence as he can, and as will be accepted. He that cannot call back his Slanders, may do ſomething toward it: He may publickly confeſs his Fault, beg Pardon of the injured Perſon, and ſpeak well of him for the Time to come.

Again, Where the Perſon is to be found, the Reſtitution is to be made to that injured Perſon; if deceaſed, to his Heir or next a-kin, as is directed by the Law of *Moſes*, Numb. v. 6, 7.

In caſe that cannot be done, we have no Way left but to pay it to God; I mean, by beſtowing it in Works of Piety or Mercy, to the Church, or to the Poor; for in this Caſe, to them it belongs who miniſter to God, or who are his Poor. All ſuch Goods eſcheat to the Church or Poor, who are God's Receivers of all thoſe Weſts and Strays that have no other Proprietor. For as, by our Law, ſuch Things belong to the Landlord: ſo it was provided by the Law of *Moſes*, Numb. v. 8. And the Nature of the Thing requires that ſo it ſhould be, that theſe Things ſhould revert to God, the great

reat and chief Lord of Heaven and Earth, in Works of Piety and Charity.

Laſtly, In the fourth Caſe, no more is to be ſaid han this, that he who is not able to make a full Reſtitution, may yet reaſonably hope, upon his ncere Repentance, to be accepted; provided firſt, hat he do what he *can* at preſent; and that he reſerves in himſelf a full Purpoſe of making an ntire Reſtitution, if God ſhould be pleaſed ever o enable him ſo to do.

5. That where a Man is able to make Reſtitution, he muſt take Care that it bear Proportion to he Wrong he hath done, or elſe he cannot expect his Pardon. This is ſtrict Juſtice and indiſpenſible. This was provided for under the Law of *Moſes*, who required not only a Sacrifice, but a fifth Part to be added to the Principal, *Numb.* v. 7. And that, I ſuppoſe, becauſe the injured Perſon was grieved as well as injured. We are to conſider our Neighbour's Wrong to the full Extent, both the *Lucrum ceſſans*, and the *Damnum emergens*; the Advantage which might have riſen, as well as the Damage ſuſtained. And this was alſo conſidered in another Law of *Moſes*, Exod. xxi. 19.

6. The Son or the Heir is not obliged to make Amends for all the Wrongs that his Father, or the Teſtator hath done. For where the Fault was a perſonal Act only, and did not increaſe his Eſtate, or any Way involve it, there can be no Reaſon that the Heir ſhould be chargeable with it. The Caſe is quite otherwiſe where the Eſtate is enjoyed by the Heir, which was gotten or increaſed by Robbery, Oppreſſion, Sacrilege, or any other indirect Means. There it deſcends *cum ſuo onere*, with its Burden and

and Incumbrance, not to say with its Curse upon it, if it be not relieved by Restitution.

7. Where the injured Person does accept of such Amends as we are able to make, though it do not bear Proportion to the Wrong we have done, yet we are discharged. For the Injured have Power to remit in Part or in Whole, and then there is no Injury done to him that is willing.

After all, when our Case is still more nice and perplexed, we shall do well to advise with our spiritual Guides.

And because the most righteous Man, and the most careful, may yet unwittingly do Wrong to his Neighbour, we shall do well to hallow and season our Wealth by plentiful Almsgiving, and return to the Poor, what we may possibly have been faulty in. The Jews had a Trespass-Offering, which they called *Asham Talui*, i. e. a *Suspence-Offering*, namely, when they doubted whether they had trespassed or not; in that Case, for greater Security, they brought this Offering. And we find *Job* making his Oblations for his Sons, who had been Feasting, in which we too often transgress: "for *Job* said, It may be that my Sons have "sinned, and cursed God in their Hearts. "Thus did *Job* continually." *Job* i. 5.

I add, That where our Injuries have begot Misunderstanding and Enmity; in order to our restoring ourselves to God's Favour, we must be reconciled to our Brother, we must forgive as we would be forgiven, and *seek Peace and pursue it.*

FINIS.

7.

Paſtoral ADVICES AND DIRECTIONS;

In order to a

VIRTUOUS LIFE here, and ETERNAL HAPPINESS hereafter.

Intended more eſpecially for the Uſe of the PEOPLE committed to the AUTHOR's Care.

By WILLIAM NEWTON,
Vicar of *Gillingham* in DORSET, and Miniſter of *Wingham* and *Stodmarſh* in KENT.

Brethren, my Heart's Deſire and Prayer to GOD for you is, that you may be ſaved, *Rom.* x. 1.

Preach the Word: be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine, 1 *Tim.* iv. 2.

Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief; for that is unprofitable for you, *Heb.* xii. 17.

The FOURTEENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for F. and C. RIVINGTON, Bookſellers to THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, No. 62, ST. PAUL's CHURCH YARD. 1793.

[Price Two-pence, or 14*s.* a Hundred.]


GR
HI
BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE PEOPLE OF MY CHARGE.

IT hath been my earneſt Deſire, ever ſince the Care of your Souls hath been committed to me, to diſcharge my Truſt to the beſt of my Power; and it is in Purſuit of this Deſire, that I now put theſe few *Advices* and *Directions* into your Hands. Had all of you been ſo careful as you ought in attending the Public Worſhip and Service of God in the *Church*, there had been *leſs* need of my taking *this* Method for

your Inſtruction; though even *then*, there would be this Advantage in it, that a *Book* lies always open before Men, when *Sermons*, if attended, are forgotten. But indeed there are too many among *you*, as in all other Pariſhes, groſly defective in this Matter; which makes ſome ſuch *private* and *perſonal* Application as this, both proper and neceſſary. For, if the Preacher never ſo conſtantly and diligently *lifts up his Voice like a Trumpet*, he cannot *ſhew* thoſe *People their Tranſgreſſions*, that fly out of the Reach of his Sound. The Laws for coming to Church have been ſuperſeded, and ſlackened in Favour to the ſcrupulous *Diſſenters*, and the wicked negligent *Abſenters* have taken the Advantage, and plead Liberty of Conſcience to ſtay at Home, and not ſerve God at all. They are not appre-

apprehenſive of any Obligations, and Ties of Conſcience to the Service of God; and ſo make the LORD'S DAY a Day of *Reſt*, but not of *Religion*. And ſo far hath Blindneſs darkened the Minds of ſome, that they think it a great Obligation to the Miniſter, if they come and hear him; and if any Offence be taken, they totally forſake the *Church*, and ſometimes *all* other Places of Divine Worſhip.

For the Service of *ſuch* Perſons as theſe, who do not give me the Opportunity of ſetting their Duty before them, with the reſt of theri Brethren, I principally drew up theſe Advices; but I have endeavoured to make them more generally uſeful, and added ſuch Things as are highly neceſſary to be ſeriouſly conſidered by *all* among you. Let me earneſtly

deſire you, therefore, to *read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt,* what is here laid before you: Do not juſt look into it, and then throw it by, as if you had no Concern therein, but only to gratify a preſent Curioſity; but often read and conſider the Book I now give you, as the beſt Counſel of one, who earneſtly wiſhes and deſires the Salvation of every Soul committed to his Charge; and is,

Your affectionate Monitor,

and faithful Servant,

June 18, 1726. W. NEWTON.

PASTORAL ADVICES

AND

DIRECTIONS,

In Order to ETERNAL LIFE, &c.

LET me intreat you to be conſtant in the Practice of that great and important Duty of PRAYER to GOD; and not only by all proper Means to keep up a Spirit of ſerious and fervent Devotion throughout your whole Lives; but, as far as is practicable, daily to obſerve ſet Seaſons and Hours for your Prayers. As ſoon as you ariſe out of your Bed in the *Morning*, begin the Day with the Performance of this Duty; and never cloſe your Eyes at *Night*, till you have recommended yourſelves to God's Favour and Protection. Our Saviour ſpake a

Parable to this End, that "Men ought "always to pray, and not to faint:" And St. *Paul* requires us to "continue "inſtant in Prayer, and to pray without "ceaſing." Now, the leaſt that theſe Precepts can poſſibly be ſuppoſed to oblige Chriſtians to, is, to pray unto God *Morning* and *Evening*; which are Seaſons the moſt of all in our power to employ as we think fit.

The Senſe of your daily Wants, one would think, ſhould ſufficiently excite you to this Duty; ſince you ſtand in continual Need of God for the Pardon of your Sins, the Aids of his Grace, and the Protection of his Providence; and Prayer is the appointed Means to derive from Him every good and perfect Gift, all Bleſſings Spiritual and Temporal.

What is there of Diſcouragement in this Duty of Prayer, that ſhould make Men ſo averſe to it as they generally are? It requires but little of their *Time*, (for it is not the Length, but the Fervor and Sincerity of our Devotions, that God regards) and there is no weariſome bodily Labour in the Diſcharge of it, nor any other

other Exercise of the spiritual Faculties, but what would be highly pleasant to us were we in our primitive Perfection, or restored to a religious State of Mind; and you may be assured that he is utterly unfit for Heaven, that has no Delight to lift up his Mind thither.

Be careful, therefore, every Morning and Evening, to offer up your Prayers to God with Reverence and Affection, not in a formal careless Manner: Do not grudge the Time you give to God, for he can and will repay you. You must also take Care that your Children say every one their Prayers; which you must teach them early. When they can say the Words of some short Prayer, instruct them in the Meaning of it; and do the same for those Servants that are ignorant; for the rest, put them in mind of their Duty, and encourage them in doing it.

Hoping that you will every one of you in private, by himself alone, thus *duly* and *seriously* perform this Duty (without which you can never think that God will bless and prosper you) I shall next,

II. Recommend to all those that are *Parents* and *Masters of Families* among you, the Exercise of *Family Devotion*. This is absolutely necessary (as I have often told you) to preserve an hearty Sense of Religion in the World, and to procure the Blessing of God on you, and all that belongs to you. Where this Duty is generally and habitually neglected, a Family can scarce be esteemed a Family of Christians, or, indeed, to have any Religion at all. And therefore the Prophet *Jeremiah* joins the Heathen and irreligious Families together: *Jer.* x. 25. "Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen "which know thee not, and upon the Fa- "milies that call not upon thy Name." A Family is a little Society united together under one common Head; and, consequently, they have some common Blessings to ask a Supply of from God, and some common Mercies to give Him Thanks for: So that they are all *equally* concerned to unite their Hearts and Lips in Prayers and Praises to their heavenly Father.

Be perswaded therefore to bring Religion into your *Houses*; and some Part of every

every Day, in the *Evening* at leaſt, to call the Members of your ſeveral Families together, and pay your common Tribute of Prayer and Praiſe, for the Mercies you daily receive in common at the Hands of God; that ſo you may the better ſucceed in whatever Buſineſs you ſet about, and be the more ſafe in all the Dangers you are expoſed to. For all our Succeſs depends upon God's Bleſſing, and all our Safety is owing to his Protection.

III. Another Thing nearly related to this, which I would remind you of, is, the careful Inſtruction of your Children and Servants in the Principles of Religion. This is a Duty of great Importance, and expreſsly enjoined to *Parents* and *Maſters* in Holy Scripture: "I know "him," (ſays God, ſpeaking of *Abraham*) "that he will command his Chil- "dren, and his Houſhold after him, and "they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord, "to do Juſtice and Judgment," *Gen.* xviii. ver. 19. And *Joſhua* declares, that "as "for him and his Houſe he would ſerve "the Lord," *Joſhua* xxiv. 15. And St. *Paul* enjoins "Fathers to bring up their "Children in the Nurture and Admoni-

"tion of the Lord," that is, in the Knowledge and Practice of the Chriſtian Religion, *Epheſ.* vi. 4. This is the Way to make your Children good and virtuous, when they grow up to be Men; to give you Comfort in them; and render them a Bleſſing to the Public. And if ever Times be better, Parents and Maſters of Families muſt begin the Work of Reformation; in whoſe Power it is, in a good meaſure, by a careful Education of thoſe under their Charge, to make the *next* Age, with the Bleſſing of God, (whatever juſt Complaints are made againſt *this*) "a Praiſe and Glory on "the Earth."

Begin betimes, therefore, and continue unwearied in a godly Education of your Children, in all the Branches of it. Maintain your Authority over them, and yet do not deal imperiouſly with them, "provoking them to Wrath." Study their Tempers and Inclinations, that you may the better manage them. Teach them to ſerve God in private, and bring them, when they are capable of it, conſtantly to the Public Worſhip; that ſo they may be accuſtomed to the Exerciſe of Religion and Goodneſs by Degrees,

till

till Holineſs and Virtue have taken Root, and they be well ſettled and confirmed in a good Courſe. And not only inſtruct them by your Words, in the Service of God, but do what you can by your good Example to bring them to ſerve Him. By theſe, and ſuch like Means, you may make your Houſes little Seminaries of true Piety and Religion; you may "train "up your Children in the Way wherein "they ſhould go, that when they are old "they may not depart from it."

IV. That which I ſhall next preſs upon you, is, a due Regard to the *Public* Worſhip of God in his own Houſe. This is a Duty which all Chriſtians, however they may differ from one another about the Manner of performing it, are agreed ought to be performed. The Public Worſhip of God is the great Inſtrument of promoting Religion and Virtue in the World; and as moſt of us owe what Share we have of theſe to it, ſo, if we obſerve the People that neglect *this* Duty, we ſhall generally find them a wicked and ungodly Race, who have no regard to the other Parts of their Duty, but "live "without God in the World."

There

There is ſcarce any Body but may have Occaſion ſometimes to abſent himſelf from Church; but for People to live Week after Week, nay, Year after Year, in the Neglect, or rather Contempt, of God's Public Worſhip; to be utterly unconcerned about the Service of God; and neither regard Him, his Day, nor his Worſhip; to hear the Summons to Church every Lord's Day, and ſee others paſs by their Doors to it, and yet loiter at Home, or about the Streets, without any Self-Reflections; I ſay, for Men to behave themſelves in ſuch a Manner in a Chriſtian Nation, and even under the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, is Matter of Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, as well as of Grief and Sorrow. Whatever Pretences Men may make for living in this Manner, it is certainly utterly inexcuſable. It is an Offence to God, and ſuch as will be ſeverely puniſhed by Him. And though it were much to be wiſhed, that the Fear of God, and a Senſe of their Obligations to Him, would engage Men to the Performance of this Duty; and that they need not be forced to it by the Fear of temporal Cenſures and Penalties; yet it may not be improper to add, that

it

it is an Offence againſt the Laws both of Church and State. For thoſe indeed who duly go to other Aſſemblies for religious Worſhip, they are, by Law, excuſed from attending upon ours, but the Law was not made to encourage Irreligion, or to tolerate Men who will not worſhip God at all; but merely for the Eaſe of thoſe who have entertained ſome Scruples about the Lawfulneſs of our Way of Worſhip; and there is no Reaſon ſuch profane Apoſtates from God's Worſhip, as go no whither for that Purpoſe, ſhould receive any Protection from it.

It may perhaps be objected, That the preſenting and proſecuting ſuch Perſons, may become a Means to drive them to ſeparate Aſſemblies; becauſe, when they ſee a neceſſity put upon them, of either going to Church or to ſuch Places, it is moſt likely, that out of Reſentment and Diſlike to us, who put this Neceſſity upon them, they will rather chooſe the latter. To which I anſwer; That if any ſo proſecuted for their irreligious Contempt of God's Worſhip, do thereon go to ſeparate Meetings, I cannot but think it is much better than living as they do; it is better they ſhould ſerve God any Way,

Way, than no Way at all; That is, I had rather they were of ſome than of no Religion; and would worſhip God in any Congregation by Law permitted, if they will not (as they ought) do it in that which is by Law eſtabliſhed.

But it is a Sort of ſhameful Conſideration, that Men ſhould need to be forced to this Duty. Much rather would I awaken ſuch Perſons from their profane Sloth and Security, by convincing them, that this is the only Way to eſcape the Puniſhment that ſhall at laſt be inflicted on thoſe who now ſay unto the Almighty, "Depart from us, for we deſire not "the Knowledge of thy Ways." Let me deſire ſuch Perſons ſeriouſly to conſider, whether any Thing deſerves more of their Care and Induſtry, than to obtain eternal Happineſs, and eſcape eternal Miſery? And yet this cannot be done without a ſincere, devout Performance of all the Acts of Religious Worſhip. Thoſe Perſons do not deſerve to be God's Friends and Favourites, that do not worſhip Him; and they are not capable of the Joys of Heaven, who reliſh not the Pleaſures of Religion, and the Worſhip of God. "They, ſays the Pſalmiſt, that

"are

" are far from Thee ſhall periſh; but " it is good for me to draw nigh unto " God."

Some among you, perhaps, may endeavour to make yourſelves eaſy in this groſs Neglect, by imagining, that it is not the Place which makes our Prayers more or leſs effectual; but that God hears our Prayers wherever we pray, and that therefore you may worſhip God at Home, as well as at Church: but now, if you pretend to be Chriſtians, and hope for Salvation in another Life, I would aſk you, whether you can hope for that Salvation any otherwiſe than in the Way that Chriſt, our Lord and Maſter, hath appointed for the obtaining of it? And is not this a main Part of Chriſt's Religion, that we ſhould publickly, in the Face of the World, own his Faith, and join with the reſt of his Members, in offering up the ſolemn Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe, and hearing his Goſpel preached, and receiving his holy Sacraments? How then dare any of you think yourſelves at Liberty to neglect theſe Duties, on ſuch Days as both God, and the Church, and the Laws, have moſt ſolemnly devoted and ſet apart for the Per-

Performance of them? Suppoſe any of you do really (as I fear is only pretended) ſpend your Time in private Prayer and Reading; yet you cannot reaſonably expect that God ſhould anſwer your private Prayers, when they ſignify a manifeſt Contempt and Neglect of his Public Worſhip and Service. There is Time enough allowed you by God for each of theſe Duties, that is, both for public and private Worſhip; and as you ought carefully to perform the latter, ſo you are no leſs obliged diligently to attend on the former. The Diſcharge of one Duty will not make Amends for the Neglect of another; much leſs for the Neglect of ſo important, ſo indiſpenſible an one, as that of Public Worſhip; without which you excommunicate yourſelves, and have no Right to be accounted Chriſtians.

Let me earneſtly exhort you all therefore, to let nothing but what is abſolutely neceſſary, ſuch as Diſability by Age or Sickneſs, or Works of Neceſſity, or Charity, (which will not admit of any other Time for the doing them) keep you at Home on the Lord's Day. Do not think it enough to attend the Public Worſhip of God as it were by Chance, and

and when you have nothing elſe to do, once in a Month, or a Fortnight, or not ſo often, (as with great Concern I ſee many of you do) but let coming to Church be eſteemed by you a Duty, which you are conſtantly obliged to perform. It is a Sign of ſome very ill Principle or other, for any one to be much a Stranger at the Houſe of God. Such a Man is certainly a bad Man, and never like to grow much better, till he reforms in this Particular. Every voluntary Omiſſion of this Kind is a grievous Sin, and muſt be ſeverely accounted for at the laſt Day.

But let me add, that you muſt not only be conſtant at Church, but careful alſo that your Behaviour there be grave, ſober, and decent, and ſuitable to the ſolemn Worſhip of God in his own Houſe, and more immediate Preſence. Whatever may ſerve to engage or expreſs your Reverence and Attention, muſt not be neglected; ſuch as *kneeling* at Prayers, *ſtanding* at the Creeds, Pſalms and Hymns, and the like. It is a Shame to ſee Perſons *ſitting* at Prayers, or careleſly looking about them, laughing, whiſpering, or talking in any Part of Divine Worſhip.

ſhip. Theſe are Indecencies and Affronts unbecoming the Preſence of an earthly Prince, much more the Preſence of God.

Let me intreat you to endeavour to wipe off that Reproach of a cold formal Worſhip, (which the Enemies of our Church caſt on the Public Service) by expreſſing, in every Part of your Behaviour, that grave, ſerious, and ardent Devotion, which ſo much becomes all the true Worſhippers of God, and may be excited by the Public Offices of our Church; which are admirably fitted to ſerve all the Ends of a grave and ſerious Piety, if Men come to them, and behave themſelves in them as they ought to do.

But whatever Care you have of your outward Behaviour, you ought to be eſpecially watchful over your Hearts and Spirits, when you are engaged in God's Worſhip: For to "draw nigh unto God "with our Mouths, when our Hearts are "far from Him," is the higheſt Contempt of Him imaginable.

You

You ſhould be infinitely careful, therefore, that your Prayers and Devotions do not degenerate into a cold Formality, and an heartleſs, or bare cuſtomary Performance of them; without that Ardency and Attention, without that earneſt Deſire to receive what you pray for, and to pleaſe God in all you do, which becomes, and is neceſſary, in thoſe who approach the great Lord of Heaven and Earth.

In like Manner, when you are ſpeaking, or ſinging God's Praiſe in Pſalms and Hymns, you muſt be careful that your Hearts accompany your Voices; or, as the Apoſtle exhorts, that you "ſing "with Grace in your Hearts to the "Lord;" and, after the Pſalmiſt's Example, "let all that is within you bleſs "his holy Name."

When the Word of God is either read or preached, you ſhould not only give your Attention with Reverence, and "take "heed how you hear," leſt your Neglect be interpreted as a Contempt of the Authority that ſpeaks to you; but hear it alſo with a Reſolution of Mind to perform what you ſhould be convinced is your Duty,

Duty, and with a particular Application of general Inſtructions to the State of your own Souls, that you may "grow "in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our "Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt."

V. Another Thing I think myſelf obliged particularly to exhort you to, is, a more *regular* and *ſolemn* Obſervation of the Lord's Day; for wherever this extenſive Duty is neglected, a whole Tide of Wickedneſs will flow in at the Breach. And as "God hath bleſſed this Day, and "hallowed it;" ſo they affront Him, and obſtruct their own Mercies, who profane it. I do therefore earneſtly and ſolemnly beſeech all of you to take this Matter into your Conſideration, and not to look upon the Obſervation of the Lord's Day as ſo inconſiderable a Duty, that a little Thing may excuſe your Neglect of it; for, be aſſured, great Matters depend upon it, even no leſs than your Improvement in Holineſs here, and your eternal Happineſs hereafter.

There ſeems too much Occaſion for me to preſs this Duty upon you: There are ſome who ſhew no manner of Regard to this Day. You ſeldom or never ſee

their Faces at Church, or the leaſt Appearance of Piety or Devotion among them: If they have any Buſineſs to do, any Journey to go, or the like, this muſt be the Day for it; though it might be, confeſſedly, as well done any other Day of the Week. Or if no Buſineſs offers, they either ſleep, or drink, or talk, or walk away the Time, which others devoutly ſpend at Church, and in preparing themſelves for another World. Nothing is ſo irkſome and tireſome to them, as what God commands; no Time lies upon their Hands like that of this Day: They know not what to do with it; and wiſh, and ſay with thoſe in the Prophet, "When will the Sabbath be over, that "we may ſet forth Corn?" When will this lingering Day be paſt; that we may return to our Trades, our Huſbandry, and ſecular Employments again?

There are others who ſeem to think it their Duty to go to Church, and be preſent at Divine Service, on this Day, (and in that they do well, and are to be commended; would to God that all People did ſo much as this!) but then they think that the Duty of the Day is over; they take no Care of their Families, or to employ

employ themſelves in private Meditation, Reading, or Praying; but all the Parts of *Sunday* vacant from Public Worſhip, are filled up with mere Idleneſs, ſauntering at their Doors, in the Fields, or Corners of the Streets; or perhaps are ſpent in downright Sin and Wickedneſs, in Acts of Debauchery, Tipling and Drunkenneſs.

Now, this partial obſerving the Lord's Day, as it is commonly managed, is but little better than a total Neglect of it. The Manner wherein ſuch Men ſpend their Time, after they come from Church, intirely defeats any good Impreſſions that might poſſibly be made upon them there. Their Idleneſs, or unlawful Pleaſures, effectually joſtle the Word of God, which they have heard, out of their Minds, and make it of no Effect. How different is this Behaviour from the Account Iſaiah gives of the true Obſervation of the Sabbath? *Iſa.* lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy "Foot from the Sabbath, from doing "thy Pleaſure on my holy Day, and "call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy "of the Lord, honourable, and ſhalt "honour Him, not doing thine own

"Ways, nor finding thine own Pleaſure,
"nor ſpeaking thine own Words; then
"ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord,
"and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the
"high Places of the Earth, and feed thee
"with the Heritage of *Jacob* thy Fa-
"ther; for the Mouth of the Lord hath
"ſpoken it."

Let me not be miſtaken in any thing that hath been now ſaid to you; Works of Neceſſity and Charity may and ought to be done on this Day; nor am I preſſing a preciſe and rigorous Obſervation of it; or for filling Peoples' Heads with falſe and Jewiſh Notions of its Sanctification. Such is the State and Condition of Man in this World, that there are many little Works and Offices of Civil Life, required to a comfortable Subſiſtence, to a ready chearful Performance of religious Duties, and to an innocent Compliance with the Rules of Decency, Civility, or Humanity. And as far as theſe are ſubſervient to, or conſiſtent with our Duty, and not forbidden by our holy Religion, they are allowable.

Far therefore am I from deſiring you to be nice and ſcrupulous about the

Punctilios of the Lord's-Day Service but then I would guard against the contrary and more common Extreme, of loose and negligent Observance of it. One stated Portion of our Time, one Day in every Week, has been, not only by the Rules of Christianity and the Law of *Moses*, but even by the Custom of all civilized Nations, set apart to a religious Use, and to the Offices of public and private Piety and Devotion. To the keeping up the Sanctity and Religion of this Day, we owe, in a great Measure, that the very face of Christianity hath been preserved in the World: So that whenever it comes to be generally profaned and neglected, there will probably be an End of the *Power* and *Form* of Godliness together.

This Day therefore is, and ever must be, "holy unto the Lord." The Time allotted to the Church, should be then employed by you with Gravity and Seriousness, and all possible Devotion. You should not only go to Church yourselves, but carry as many of your Dependents with you as can be spared, and see that they behave themselves decently and reverently there; Part of the rest of this holy

holy Day you ſhould employ in private Prayer and Devotion, and in the religious Care of your Families; that is, in Catechiſing and Inſtructing Children and Servants; in reading the Scriptures, and other uſeful Books; in Prayer, ſinging of Pſalms, or other pious Exerciſes; or indeed, in *all* theſe, in their ſeveral Courſes and Order, as your Time will allow. The other Part may be allowed for ſuch good Converſation or innocent Exerciſe, as may ſerve to refreſh and enliven your Minds, and is conſiſtent with Sobriety, Virtue and Religion. But all unneceſſary Buſineſs, and needleſs Journies; all haunting of Public Houſes, and rude and riotous Aſſemblies, or idle ſauntering in the Streets; all vain Sports and Paſtimes, and indecent Liberties, (now too common in many Places) ought to be baniſhed from every Part of this Day of Reſt and Holineſs.

In ſhort: You ſhould endeavour that your Carriage and Behaviour on this Day, be ſuch as the Day itſelf is, ſerious, and yet chearful; ſacred, and yet not ſuperſtitious; without indulging to Libertiniſm and Profaneneſs on the one hand,

or a Jewiſh and Phariſaical Rigour on the other; having always in view the End and Deſign of the Inſtitution, which is to promote God's Glory, and the Happineſs of Men. But,

VI. I cannot omit to put you in mind of another important Duty of our holy Religion, that is, the frequent and devout Receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I may be excuſed in ſaying the leſs on this Head, becauſe it has not only ſo often been the Subject of my public Diſcourſes, (wherein I have repreſented the Nature of this Duty with all poſſible Plainneſs, and urged its Neceſſity, with a Vigour in ſome meaſure ſuitable to ſo great an Occaſion; I have told you the Danger of wilful Neglect on the one Hand, and the Benefits of a due Performance on the other; and have given plain and full Anſwers to the Objections that are uſually made againſt diſcharging this Duty:) But though I cannot complain that theſe Endeavours have been altogether in vain, and to no purpoſe; yet I cannot but obſerve, with great Sorrow of Heart, that too many of you remain ſtill inſenſible and unconcerned,

cerned, and are not yet prevailed upon to render this eaſy, this delightful and beneficial Service to the great Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind.

This Neglect is too common among all Sorts and Degrees of People; but I obſerve it more general in two Sorts of them; that is, thoſe that are young, and thoſe of the poorer and meaner Rank; of both which Sort of Perſons we ſee but very few, in Compariſon, at the Lord's Table.

As to young Perſons, the Church takes particular Care, that ſuch of them, in every Pariſh, as are arrived to the Age of ſixteen Years, and have been, or are deſirous to be Confirmed, ſhould come to the Sacrament: being firſt inſtructed in the Nature and Deſign of this holy Inſtitution, and the Obligation it lays upon them. And with very great Reaſon: For, ſince at this Sacrament they are to renew their Covenant made in Baptiſm, what can be more proper than that they come to it as early as poſſible, and there again devote themſelves to the Service of God? Without this, they are

Chriſtians in Name, but not in Reality. What was done for them by others, in their tender Age, will not at all avail for their Salvation, unleſs, being thuſs come to Years of Diſcretion, they give their own Conſent to it.

Let me therefore earneſtly deſire all young Perſons to conſider, that they are entering on a vicious World, where they will meet with innumerable Temptations to break their Baptiſmal Vow; that they carry about with them weak and corrupt Natures, prone to that which is Evil, and averſe to that which is Good; that the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, will be their conſtant Enemies; which they cannot hope to encounter with Succeſs, but by the continual Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit; and which they cannot hope to have, without the diligent Uſe of this, and the other Ordinance, appointed by God for the conveying of it to the Souls of Men: and if they are conquered by theſe Enemies, it will be to their certain and everlaſting Ruin: They will be miſerable in this World, and the next.

Let

Let us consider farther, that however youthful and healthful they may be at present, yet they know not how soon God may call them out of the World. They cannot but see Persons of all Ages, the young as well as the old, removed from their Acquaintance and Society continually; and nothing can secure to them a safe and comfortable Death, but their being resolved and steadfast Christians; which they cannot be esteemed, either by themselves or others, if, when they are by Age duly capable of it, they neglect this most solemn Institution of our holy Religion. But if it shall please God to prolong their Lives, the Course I am persuading them to, will prove to their great Comfort as well as Safety; it will be the Means of procuring them an happy Life on Earth, and eternal Glory in Heaven.

Some young Persons, perhaps, may abstain from the Lord's Table, out of a sinful Bashfulness; or for fear of the Reproaches of the World; But our Lord hath expressly told us, that if "any one "(young or old) shall be ashamed of him "and his Words," that is, of making a public Profession of his holy Religion,

" in an adulterous and ſinful Generation,
" of him he alſo will be aſhamed when
" he cometh in the Glory of his Father,
" and the holy Angles."

I therefore earneſtly exhort all ſuch young People as are piouſly diſpoſed, (whether Servants or others) and who intend to lead a godly and Chriſtian Life, to come betimes to the holy Sacrament; and I hope their Parents and Maſters will not only excite and encourage them to this Part of their Duty, but aſſiſt and direct them alſo in the due Performance of it.

I.

The other Sort of Perſons, who are apt to neglect coming to the Sacrament, are thoſe whoſe Circumſtances are very mean and low in the World. Theſe indeed are apt to be very careleſs of Religion in general; they cannot ſpare Time to worſhip God; for all the Time they have, is thought by them little enough to get Bread in, and provide for their Families; but however it comes to paſs, this particular Duty of the Sacrament is thought not to belong to them, but deſigned only for the richer and better People

People of the Pariſh; and therefore moſt of them as carefully abſtain, as if they were really prohibited from coming to the Lord's Table. But poor People ſhould conſider, that they are under the ſame Obligations with others to take Care of their Souls, and provide for Eternity; and conſequently, have no Pretence to be excuſed from performing this, or any other Part of their Duty. The Command is univerſal; equally extending to all Sorts and Degrees of Men, who hope for Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt—"This do in Re-"membrance of me." Our Saviour does not ſay, that ſome ſhould do it, and others omit it; but he ſays, *Do this*, without any Reſtriction or Limitation, commanding the Obſervance of this holy Inſtitution by all thoſe (whether high or low, rich or poor) who expect to be ſaved by his Death and Sufferings. The pious Poor are equally the Favourites of our Lord, with the biggeſt of us all; and have therefore an equal Right to be entertained at his Table. "Though he was "rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor, "that we through his Poverty might be "made rich." And it was particularly propheſied of the Times of the Meſſiah,

that the Poor especially should be mad
Partakers of the Blessings of the Gospe
" the Poor have the Gospel preached un
" them." So that, let Mens' outward Ci
cumstances be never so mean, if in th
inward Frame and Temper of their Mind
and the general Course of their Lives an
Actions, they be truly pious and relig
ous, fearing God, and working Righ
teousness, they may, nay, they ought t
come to this Sacrament. As they ar
not upon that Account excluded, so nei
ther will their Poverty be at all their Ex
cuse, for neglecting this great and nece
sary Duty.

Let none of you therefore (of wha
Rank or Condition soever you be) b
any longer Strangers at the Lord's Table
There is little Reason to think you wi
ever make any Progress in Virtue an
Goodness, till you bring yourselves to a
frequent and constant Custom of com
ing to this holy Sacrament. Nor le
any among you be discouraged from thi
Duty by unreasonable Apprehensions
or groundless Fears and Scruples, abou
the Danger of performing it. I have
often told you, that every Man that sin
cerely

cerely endeavours to lead his Life as a Chriſtian ought to do, may as ſafely as any Time come to the Lord's Table, as he may come to Church to join in the other Parts of God's Worſhip. Thoſe of you that pretend you are not fitted and prepared for it, ſhould conſider, that it is your Duty to be ſo; and if you are not prepared to receive the Sacrament, you are not qualified for God's Mercy here or hereafter; you are not prepared for the Happineſs of Heaven, and can have no Hopes of coming thither: But if you prepare yourſelves as well as you can, by a true Repentance for all your Sins and Miſcarriages; by a ſincere and firm Reſolution to forſake them, and to do better for the future; to be more careful of all your Actions, and more conſtant in Prayer to God for his Grace to enable you to keep his Commandments; by being in Charity with all Men, and by forgiving thoſe who have injured you in Word or Deed, as you hope for Forgiveneſs at the Hands of God; I ſay, if you thus prepare yourſelves for, and come with ſuch Diſpoſitions to this holy Sacrament, God will certainly accept of you and your Services, and give you the

Comfort and Benefit of this ſolemn Ordinance; that is, He will ſeal to you all thoſe Bleſſings which are purchaſed and procured for us by the Death of Chriſt. But now,

VII. Laſtly, moſt of the Duties I have before been recommending to you, being only the Means and Inſtruments of true Religion; that is, ſuch Things as are neceſſary in order to the working in us ſo holy a Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind, and rendering us ſo pure and virtuous in our Lives, as may qualify us for the Favour of God; and being not at all acceptable to him, when ſeparated from this End: This, I ſay, being the Nature of theſe inſtrumental Duties, I muſt, in Diſcharge of my own Duty, and in Faithfulneſs to your Souls, give this Caution, that you do not rely upon theſe things alone for your Salvation, but take Care that they attain their proper End, and be the Means of making you truly good, virtuous and "holy in "all Manner of Converſation:" Prayer, Reading, and Hearing the Word of God, obſerving the Lord's Day, and receiving the Sacrament, are the Means

appointed by God for improving of us in Holineſs and Goodneſs; but we muſt not reſt in the Uſe of theſe Means, and think ourſelves religious merely upon this Account; for the Life of Religion does not conſiſt in the bare Uſe of them, but in the real Efficacy of them upon our Hearts and Lives. "Not every one (ſays our "Saviour) that ſaith unto me, Lord, "Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of "Heaven, but he that doth the Will of "my Father which is in Heaven."

You muſt therefore have an univerſal Regard to your Duty, and be defective in no Part of it. You muſt not only be pious and devout with reſpect to God, but chaſte, ſober, and temperate with regard to yourſelves; and juſt, faithful, and charitable towards all Men. You muſt mortify your Luſts, govern your Paſſions and your Tongues, and order your whole Converſation aright, or it is impoſſible you ſhould ſee the Salvation of God. You muſt (as far as the Imperfection of this State will admit) practiſe every Virtue of the Chriſtian Life, and avoid every Sin; but eſpecially thoſe Sins that do ſo generally

generally abound in the World, to the Reproach of our Chriſtian Profeſſion, and the final Ruin of Mens Souls. Particularly,

You muſt keep ſtrictly from profane Swearing and Curſing; for where theſe Sins are indulged, there is an End to all reaſonable Pretences to Religion. It is the baſeſt and ſillieſt Thing in the World, for ſuch as own the Being of a great and terrible God, to treat him with Scorn and Reproach. What can be more abſurd, than to pray to God one Hour, and openly defy him the next? What can we think of thoſe ſenſeleſs, thoughtleſs Creatures, who own that they depend upon God for all their Enjoyments, and Hopes of this Life and that to come, and yet provoke him to his Face, and (for a Matter of no Concernment) do, in Effect, challenge him to do his worſt? This is a Sin ſo utterly without Temptation, ſo viod of all the common Baits of Profit, or Pleaſure, or Reputation, to intice you to it, that I would willingly hope there will be found no common Swearers or Profaners of the Name of God among you; and that you will not only

only refrain from it yourſelves, but give all juſt Diſcountenance to ſo heinous an Offence and Provocation, in all whom you obſerve guilty of it; eſpecially your Children and Servants, and all thoſe who are under your more immediate Inſpection and Care.

You muſt alſo be particularly watchful againſt that loathſome Sin of Drunkenneſs, or Intemperance. This is a Vice not only ſo inconſiſtent with all Pretences to Chriſtianity, but with all that is either honourable, pleaſant or decent, that every reaſonable Man muſt abhor it, as he would the Nature of an Ape, or a Swine. Beſides the future Puniſhment of Drunkenneſs (for of Drunkards it is particularly recorded in holy Scripture, that they "ſhall not inherit the "Kingdom of God") it is at preſent moſt injurious to the Health of the Body, and the Faculties of the Mind, and brings Men to Want and Poverty; it ruins their Reputation and Character, and renders them incapable of doing any Good to themſelves or others. So that if you value either your preſent or future Happineſs, you muſt carefully avoid this Sin, and

and all Approaches to it, as the great Enemy of both.

Again: You muſt keep at the utmoſt Diſtance from Lewdneſs and Uncleanneſs. Theſe are Sins likewiſe not only highly offenſive to God, and which will be ſeverely puniſhed by Him in the other World, ("for Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge") but of fatal Tendency to the preſent Happineſs of Men, and which introduce the greateſt Diſorders and Confuſions into Civil Society. This is ſo evident, that I need not go about to prove it. It is impoſſible to number the Feuds and Miſchiefs, the private Griefs, Sorrows and Uneaſineſſes, which this violent and headſtrong Luſt hath produced in almoſt every Place. It is a Sin juſtly ſcandalous and infamous among Men; it naturally tends to deſtroy the Health and Strength of the Body, and to conſume the Subſtance of thoſe that indulge themſelves in it. And it is a Sign of the great Corruption of the Age, and of People's being arrived to a deſperate Pitch of Wickedneſs, that they are ſo ready, either through Cuſtom or Impunity,

nity, or the Devil's Infatuation, to make light of ſo great and complicated a Vice.

Though I think it proper to give you a Caution againſt theſe Sins particularly, as being too commonly practiſed in the World, and a great Reproach to our Chriſtian Profeſſion; yet you muſt not think yourſelves at liberty to practiſe any other Vice, becauſe you abſtain from theſe groſs Enormities. For by every known Sin, we do, as it were, run upon a Sword's Point, and endanger our Salvation, as much as a deep Wound in our Body would do our Life; and you know that one ſuch may deſtroy a Man as well as twenty. You muſt therefore (as I ſaid above) have an univerſal Regard to your Duty, and be defective in no Part of it. You ought indeed to have a ſpecial Regard to thoſe Duties which are more conſiderable, and wherein Religion does mainly conſiſt; ſuch as *Piety* towards God, *Temperance* and *Chaſtity* in regard to yourſelves; *Truth* and *Juſtice*, *Goodneſs*, *Peace* and *Charity* toward all Men; but then no other Grace and Virtue ought to be neglected by you; but you muſt "abound in all the Fruits of Righ-

"teouſneſs,

" teouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt,
" to the Praiſe and Glory of God."

Theſe are the plain Advices and Directions I thought it neceſſary to lay before you, for the daily Conduct of your Lives in the Ways of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, in order to your eternal Happineſs. And that ſuch a Behaviour as I have been recommending is neceſſary to that End, is Argument ſufficient to engage any reaſonable Man to it. The preſent Benefit and Advantage of a religious Life, is a Motive to the Practice of it, not to be overlooked or deſpiſed: But that it is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to our future, our eternal Happineſs, and will moſt certainly procure it, is an Argument that cannot poſſibly be reſiſted by thoſe who have the Reaſon and Underſtanding of Men, if they duly weigh and conſider it. The greateſt and moſt weighty Affairs in the World, are but a vain Employment, but a mere Trifling and Impertinence, in compariſon with eternal Salvation. Our only true Intereſt is the Intereſt of our Souls; we have but

but one great Buſineſs in the World, properly ſpeaking, and that is to make ſure of our everlaſting Happineſs, and to ſecure to ourſelves the Fruition of that excellent Good, which is the true End of our Being. This, as *Solomon* expreſſes it, is the *Whole Duty of Man*, that is, his only conſiderable Intereſt and Concern, and that upon which all depends. As to the Things of the World, a great Abundance of them is not neceſſary to our temporal Happineſs; much leſs are they neceſſary to the great End for which we live. But it is moſt abſolutely neceſſary, and of the laſt Importance, that we ſhould attain to the Fruition of God, whoſe loving Kindneſs is better than Life, and without whom we cannot be happy. All the reſt may be ſpared, but there is no diſpenſing with this *one Thing needful*. Should we loſe all beſides, and gain this, yet ſtill we ſhould be happy; and ſhould we gain all beſides, (all the Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures of this World) and loſe this, we ſhould ſtill be miſerable. For what Gain can ever make Amends for ſuch a Loſs? "What ſhall it profit a "Man (ſays our Saviour) if he gain "the whole World, and loſe his own "Soul?"

"Soul?" Which is then only loſt, when it loſes God, the everlaſting Spring of Joy and Happineſs.

Theſe Things I would urge upon you in the Cloſe, with all poſſible Earneſtneſs, to awaken in your Minds a due Senſe of the Importance of what hath been before ſaid to you; that all your Inquiries may not be, (as they too commonly are) "what you ſhall eat, and "what you ſhall drink, and wherewithal "you ſhall be clothed;" but that you may ſeriouſly and vigorouſly ſet yourſelves to "work out your own Salvation "with Fear and Trembling." And may it pleaſe the God of all Grace to give a Bleſſing to theſe, and all my other Endeavours for your Good; that we may receive the End of our Labours and Hopes, even the Salvation of all our Souls; through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

FINIS.

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8.

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PREACHED AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF ROCHESTER,

WHO DIED AT WOODSTOCK-PARK, JULY 26, 1680, AND WAS BURIED AT SPILSBURY IN OXFORDSHIRE, AUGUST 9.

BY ROBERT PARSONS, M.A.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ANNE, AND ELIZABETH,

DOWAGER COUNTESSES OF

ROCHESTER.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

YOUR Ladyſhips, or any elſe, cannot think meaner of this Performance than I myſelf do; for beſides the great hurry and diſorder that I was in upon the loſs of ſuch a Patron as my Lord, I am ſufficiently conſcious how unfit I am to appear in public, eſpecially upon ſuch a nice and great Subject. As His Lordſhip's particular Commands brought me to the Pulpit, ſo Your's only have brought me to the Preſs. And therefore I hope, whatever Uſage the following Diſcourſe may meet with abroad, I ſhall

always find a ſhelter in Your Ladyſhips Favours: and the rather, becauſe You can, both of you, largely atteſt the Truth of moſt of the remarkable Occurences that I have taken notice of during his Lordſhip's penitential Sickneſs. I ſhall add nothing more, but wiſh You may never forget the Goodneſs of Almighty God, who (through this whole melancholy Scene) has ſignalized his good Providence to You both: and that You may ever live under the ſpecial Protection thereof, is the conſtant Prayer of,

Your Honours moſt Faithful, and

Moſt Obedient Humble Servant,

ADDERBURY,
Auguſt 30, 1680.

ROBERT PARSONS.

ST. LUKE xv. 7.

I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons that need no repentance.

IF ever there were a Subject that might deſerve and exhauſt all the Treaſures of religious Eloquence in the Deſcription of ſo great a Man, and ſo great a Sinner as now lies before us; together with the Wonders of the Divine Goodneſs, in making him as great a Penitent; I think the preſent Occaſion affords one as remarkable as any Place or Age can produce.

INDEED ſo great and full of Matter it is, that it is too big to come out of my Mouth, and perhaps not all of it fit or needful ſo to do. The greatneſs of his Parts are well enough known, and of his Sins too well, in the World; and neither my Capacity, nor Experience, nor my Profeſſion, will allow me to be ſo proper a Judge, either of the

one or the other. Only as God has been pleaſed to make me a long while a ſad Spectator, and a ſecret Mourner for his Sins; ſo has he at laſt graciouſly heard the Prayers of his neareſt Relations, and true Friends, for his Converſion and Repentance: and it is the good Tidings of that eſpecially, which God has done for his Soul, that I am now to *publiſh and tell abroad to the World*, not only by the Obligations of mine Office, in which I had the honour to be a weak Miniſter to it, but by his own expreſs and dying Commands.

Now although, to deſcribe this worthily, would require a Wit equal to that with which he lived, and a Devotion too, equal to that with which he died, and to match either will be a very hard Taſk; yet beſides that I am not ſufficient for theſe Things, (for who is?) and that my Thoughts have been rather privately buſied to ſecure a real Repentance to himſelf, whilſt living, than to publiſh it abroad to others in an artificial Dreſs after he is dead; I ſay, beſides all this, I think I ſhall have leſs need to call in the Aids of ſecular Eloquence. The proper Habit of Repentance is not fine Linen, or any delicate Array, ſuch as are uſed in the Court or Kings Houſes, but Sackcloth and Aſhes: And the Way which God Almighty takes to convey it, *is not by the Words of Man's Wiſdom*, but by the Plainneſs of his written Word, aſſiſted by the inward Power and *Demonſtration of the Spirit*: and the Effects

fects it works, and by which it diſcovers itſelf, are not any raptures of Wit and Fancy, but the moſt humble Proſtrations both of Soul and Spirit, and the captivating all human Imaginations to the Obedience of a deſpiſed Religion, and a crucified Saviour.

AND it is in this Array, I intend to bring out this Penitent to you; an Array which I am ſure he more valued, and deſired to appear in, both to God and the World, than in all the Triumphs of Wit and Gallantry: And therefore (waving all theſe Rhetorical Flouriſhes, as beneath the Solemnity of the Occaſion, and the Majeſty of that great and weighty Truth I am now to deliver) I ſhall content myſelf with the Office of a plain Hiſtorian, to relate faithfully and impartially what I ſaw and heard; eſpecially during his Penitential Sorrows; which if all that hear me this Day had been Spectators of, there would then have been no need of a Sermon to convince Men, but every Man would have been as much a Preacher to himſelf of this Truth, as I am, except theſe Sorrows: And yet even theſe Sorrows ſhould be turned into Joys too, if we would only do what we pray for, that the *Will of God may be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven:* for ſo our bleſſed Lord aſſures us; *I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth,* &c. From which I ſhall conſider,

First, THE Sinner particularly that is before us.

Secondly, THE Repentance of this Sinner, together with the Means, the Time, and all probable Sincerity of it.

Thirdly, THE Joy that is in Heaven, and ſhould be on Earth, for the Repentance of this Sinner.

Fourthly, THE comparative greatneſs and pre-eminence of this Joy, on the Account of his Example, that is, and ſhould be for the Repentance of this Sinner, more than for the conſtant and uniform virtuouſneſs of any good Liver; which will naturally lead me to my

Fifth and laſt Particular, To a ſpecial Addreſs or Application to all that hear me; that they would all join in this Joy, in Praiſe and Thankſgivings to God for the Converſion of this Sinner; and if there be any that have been like him in their Sins, that they would alſo ſpeedily imitate him in their Repentance.

AND *First*, Let us conſider the Perſon before us, as he was certainly a great Sinner. But becauſe Man was upright before he was a Sinner, and to meaſure the Greatneſs of his Fall, it will be neceſſary to take a view of that Height from which he fell; give me leave to go back a little to look into the Rock

Rock from which he was hewn, the Quality, Family, Education, and Perſonal Accompliſhments of this great Man. In doing of which, I think no Man will charge me with any Deſign of cuſtomary Flattery or Formality; ſince I intend only thereby to ſhew the Greatneſs and Unhappineſs of his Folly, in the perverting ſo many excellent Abilities and Advantages for Virtue and Piety into the Service of Sin, and ſo becoming a more univerſal, inſinuating, and prevailing Example of it.

As for his Family, on both ſides, from which he was deſcended, they were ſome of the moſt famous in their Generations. His Grandfather was that excellent and truly great Man, CHARLES Lord WILMOT, Viſcount *Athlone* in *Ireland*. HENRY his Father, who inherited the ſame Title and Greatneſs, was by his late Majeſty King CHARLES I. created Baron of *Adderbury* in *Oxfordſhire*, and by his preſent Majeſty, Earl of *Rocheſter*. He was a Man of ſignal Loyalty, and Integrity indeed; and of ſuch Courage and Conduct in Military Affairs, as became a great General. But my Endeavours of this Kind are ſuperſeded, though I had Time, by my want of Abilities to declare it worthily, as well as by the notoriety of theſe Severals; and that Perſon muſt be very ignorant of the late Tranſactions in the three Kingdoms, and the Misfortunes of our preſent King, who underſtands not the Service and Value of that eminent Subject. His

Mother (of whom I might ſpeak great and worthy Things, were it not that I avoid the Imputation of Flattery) was the Relict of Sir FRANCIS HENRY LEE, of *Ditchly* in the County of *Oxford*, Baronet, Grandmother to the preſent Right Honourable Earl of *Litchfield*, and the Daughter of that Generous and Honourable Gentleman Sir JOHN St. JOHN of *Lyddiard*, in the County of Wilts, Baronet, whoſe Family was ſo remarkable for Loyalty, that ſeveral of his Sons willingly offered themſelves in the Day of Battle, and died for it; and whilſt the Memory of the *Engliſh* or *Iriſh* Rebellion laſts, that Family cannot want a due Veneration in the Minds of any Perſon, that loves either God or the King.

As for his Education, it was in *Wadham* College in *Oxford*, under the Care of that wiſe and excellent Governor Dr. BLANDFORD, the late Right Reverend Biſhop of *Worceſter*; there it was that he laid a good Foundation of Learning and Study, though he afterwards built upon that Foundation Hay and Stubble. There he firſt ſucked from the Breaſt of his Mother the Univerſity, thoſe Perfections of Wit, and Eloquence, and Poetry, which afterwards by his own corrupt Stomach, or ſome ill Juices, were turned into Poiſon to himſelf and others; which certainly can be no more a blemiſh to thoſe illuſtrious Seminaries of Piety and good Learning, than a diſobedient Child is to a wiſe and virtuous

Father, or the Fall of Man to the Excellency of Paradiſe.

His Quality I ſhall take no Notice of; there being ſo much of what was excellent and extraordinary in this great Perſon, that I have no Room for any Thing that is common to him with others.

He had a Wit ſo rare and fruitful in its Invention, and withal ſo choice and delicate in its Judgment, that there is nothing wanting in his Compoſures to give a full Anſwer to that Queſtion, *What and where Wit is?* except the Purity and Choice of Subject. For had ſuch excellent Seeds but fallen upon good Ground, and inſtead of pitching upon a Beaſt or a Luſt, been raiſed up on high, to celebrate the Myſteries of the Divine Love, in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs; I perſuade myſelf, we might by this time have received from his Pen as excellent an Idea of Divine Poetry under the Goſpel, uſeful to the teaching of Virtue, eſpecially in this Generation, as his profane Verſes have been to deſtroy it. And I am confident, had God ſpared him a longer Life, this would have been the whole Buſineſs of it, as I know it was the Vow and Purpoſe of his Sickneſs.

His natural Talent was excellent, but he had hugely improved it by Learning and Induſtry, being thoroughly acquainted with all the Claſſic Authors, both Greek and Latin; a thing very rare, if not peculiar to him, among thoſe of his Quality; which yet he uſed

not as other Poets have done, to tranſlate or ſteal from them, but rather to better and improve them by his own natural Fancy.

His other perſonal Accompliſhments in all the Perfections of a Gentleman, for the Court or the Country, whereof he was known by all Men to be a very great Maſter, is no part of my Buſineſs to deſcribe or underſtand: and whatever they were in themſelves, I am ſure they were but miſerable Comforters to him, ſince they only miniſtered to his Sins, and made his Example the more fatal and dangerous; for ſo we may own (nay I am obliged by him not to hide, but to ſhew the Rocks, which others may avoid) that he was once one of the *greateſt of Sinners.*

And truly none but one ſo great in Parts could be ſo; as the chiefeſt of the Angels for Knowledge and Power became moſt dangerous. His Sins were like his Parts, (for from them corrupted they ſprang) all of them high and extraordinary. He ſeemed to affect ſomething ſingular and paradoxical in his Impieties, as well as in his Writings, above the Reach and Thought of other Men; taking as much Pains to draw others in, and to pervert the right Ways of Virtue, as the Apoſtles and Primitive Saints did, *to ſave their Souls, and them that heard them.* For this was the heightning and amazing Circumſtance of his Sins, that he was ſo diligent and induſtrious to recommend and propagate them; not like thoſe of old that *hated the Light*; but thoſe the

the Prophet mentions, *Iſa.* iii. 9. *Who declare their Sin as* Sodom *and hide it not*, that *take it upon their Shoulders, and bind it to them as a Crown*; framing Arguments for Sin, making Proſelytes to it, and writing Panegyricks upon Vice; ſinging Praiſes to the great Enemy of God, and caſting down Coronets and Crowns before his Throne.

NAY ſo confirmed was he in Sin, that he lived, and oftentimes almoſt died, a Martyr for it. God was pleaſed ſometimes to puniſh him with the Effects of his Folly, yet till now (he confeſſed) *they had no Power to melt him into true Repentance*; or if at any time he had ſome lucid Intervals from his Folly and Madneſs, yet, alas! how ſhort and tranſitory were they? All that *Goodneſs was but as a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew which vaniſhes away*; he ſtill returned to the ſame Exceſs of Riot, and that with ſo much the more Greedineſs, the longer he had faſted from it.

AND yet even this deſperate Sinner, that one would think had made *a covenant with Death, and was at an agreement with Hell*, and juſt upon the Brink of both; God, to magnify the Riches of Grace and Mercy, was pleaſed to ſnatch as a Brand out of the Fire. As St. PAUL, though *before a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and injurious*, yet *obtained mercy, that in him Chriſt Jeſus might ſhew forth all long ſuffering, for a pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe on him to ever-*

everlaſting life, 1 Tim. i. 13, 16. ſo God ſtruck him to the Ground as it were by a Light from Heaven, and a Voice of Thunder round about Him. Inſomuch that now the Scales fall from off his Eyes, as they did from St. PAUL'S; his ſtony Heart was opened, and the Streams of Tears guſhed out, the bitter but wholeſome Tears of true Repentance.

AND that this may appear to be ſo, I think it neceſſary to account for theſe three Things;

I. For the Means of it; that it was not barely the Effect of Sickneſs, or the Fear of Death; but the Hand of God alſo working in them, and by them, manifeſtly.

II. FOR the Time of it: that though it was a Death-bed Repentance, and therefore full of Danger, and the utmoſt Hazard; yet was it not impoſſible to be true, nor abſolutely deſperate.

III. FOR the Sincerity of it: that what was thus poſſible to be good and true, probably was ſo; which, though none but God that ſees the Heart, can tell certainly, yet Man even alſo may and ought to believe it; not only in the Judgment of Charity, but of moral Juſtice, from all evident Signs of it, which were poſſible to be given by one in his Condition.

AND firſt for the Means or Method of it, That which prepared the Way for it was a ſharp

ſharp and painful Sickneſs, with which God was pleaſed to viſit him: the Way which the Almighty takes to reduce the wandering Sinner to the Knowledge of God, and of himſelf: *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion unto the houſe of Judah; I, even I will tear and go away; and none ſhall relieve him. I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face; and in their affliction they will ſeek me early*, Hoſ. v. 14, 15.

And though to forſake our Sins then, when we can no longer enjoy them, ſeems to be rather the Effect of Impotency and Neceſſity, than of Choice, and ſo not ſo acceptable or praiſe-worthy; yet we find God Almighty often uſes the one to bring about the other; and improves a forced abſtinence from Sin, into a ſettled loathing, and a true deteſtation of it; of which I ſhall give two noted Inſtances. The firſt out of the Old Teſtament, in the famous Caſe of *Manaſſeh*, 2 Chron. xxxiii. (the neareſt Parallel that I can find, both to the Sin and Repentance of the Perſon before us;) when *he did that which was evil in the ſight of the Lord, more than all the kings of Judah before him, and had made Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem to err, and do worſe than the Heathen, whom the Lord had deſtroyed before them*; yet we ſee God made uſe even of this Way to reduce him to true Repentance; for we read at the xith *verſe* of this Chapter, *Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the*

hoſt

hoſt of the king of Aſſyria, which took Manaſſ among the thorns, and bound him with fetter and carried him to Babylon; and it follows i the next verſe, *When he was in affliction h beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſ greatly before the God of his fathers, and pray unto him; and he was entreated of him, an heard his ſupplication, and brought him again Jeruſalem, and unto his kingdom: then Ma naſſeh knew that the Lord was God*, ver. 1 And the Truth of his Repentance, though oc caſioned firſt by his Affliction, appeared after wards by the following Reformation whic he wrought; for *he took away the ſtrange God* ver. 15.

THE ſecond Inſtance I ſhall give of true, though forced Repentance, is in th well known Caſe of the Prodigal Son, whic follows my Text in this Chapter: though *had waſted all his ſubſtance with riotous living* and was forced back to his Father's Houſe only by extreme Hunger and Neceſſity, ye he was joyfully received by Him, for *hi father ran and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him*, ver. 20. and *the fatted calf* was killed for him; and when his elder Brother was angry at it, the good Father juſtifies his Procedure in *ver.* 32. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and b glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, was loſt and is found.*

AND truly it is one good Sign, that God is now taking Men into the number of his Children, when he is fixing upon them one of the greateſt Badges and Characters of them; for therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *we are chaſtened of*

f the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned ith the world; whilſt thoſe who are reſerved or Deſtruction hereafter, do uſually in this ife *come into no misfortune, nor are plagued like ther men.* For God *does not afflict any wilingly, nor grieve the children of men:* but as e is grieved himſelf for the ſuffering of his Children, (for *in all their affliction*, ſaith the Prophet, *he was afflicted*) ſo he doth not uſully puniſh wicked Men both here and hereſter; and therefore they who are to be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, God uffers to *enjoy their portion in this life* without any Diſturbance. And becauſe the Days f *Darkneſs* muſt be *many*, therefore does he uffer the *Sinner* many times, to *die an hunred years old*, that he may take his full ſwing f what he hath ſet his Affections upon; and ſter a long and proſperous Life here, without any check in his career of Wickedneſs, e lets him drop down into Hell, without the eaſt apprehenſion of Danger. So that in hat Senſe it is true which the Poets ſay, when hey tell us, that the Deſcent into Hell is eaſy nd pleaſant.

And therefore, on the contrary, we may eaſonably preſume, that Tribulation and Anguiſh, when it is borne with Patience and Reſignation to God, and when it works a erious Reformation, will certainly miniſter o us an Entrance into everlaſting Reſt; and hat the greater our Sufferings have been, the more abundant and much more grateful ſhall our Reſt be.

Affliction,

Affliction, as it *riſes not out of the Duſt* but deſcends from that God, at whoſe hand we receive evil as well as good; ſo neither is it deſigned to deject us thither, but to raiſe us up to God from whence itſelf comes. The Pains of the Croſs, as well that Croſs which we muſt bear ourſelves, as that which our Saviour bore, do in ſome Senſe open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers; and to ſome, as the Penitent Thief, the hope of Paradiſe is not given till their laſt Hour; and thoſe who come in then, God is often pleaſed to make equal to them who *have borne the burden and heat of the day*; nay oftentimes to give them more, for he *will love much, to whom much is forgiven*.

It is true, there are ſuch ſtubborn Natures that, like Clay, are rather hardened by the Fire of Afflictions: ungracious Children, that fly in the Face of their heavenly Father in the very Inſtant when he is correcting them; or, it may be, like thoſe Children under the Rod, who promiſe Wonders then, and preſently after forget all. Such as theſe we have deſcribed, Pſal. lxxviii. 34,—37. *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and inquired early after God; then they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God was their Redeemer: nevertheleſs they did but flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither continued they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.* And it is probable this had been the Caſe formerly of this Perſon. But there was an evident difference betwixt the

e Effects of this Sickneſs upon him, and any others before: "He had other Sentiments of Things now, he told me, and acted upon quite different Principles;" he was t vext with it, as it was painful or hindred m from his Sins, which he would have *lled under his Tongue* all the while, and long again to be at; but he "ſubmitted patiently to it, accepted it at the hand of God, and was thankful, bleſſing and praiſing God not only in, but for his Extremities." here was now no *Curſings*, no *Railings*, or *eproaches* to his Servants, nor thoſe about m, which in other Sickneſſes were their ual Entertainment; but he treated them ith all the Meekneſs and Patience in the Vorld; begging Pardon frequently of the eaneſt of them but for a haſty Word, which e extremity of his Sickneſs, and ſharpneſs f his Pain might eaſily force from him. His rayers were not ſo much for Eaſe or Health, r a continuance in Life; as for Grace, and aith, and perfect Reſignation to the Will of od. So that, I think, we may not only chatably but juſtly conclude, that his Sickneſs as not the chief Ingredient, but, through he Grace of God, an effectual Means of a ue, though late Repentance.

Secondly, And for that I am to account in he next place, I mean the Time of it; and to ake it out to you, that though it was a Death-bed Repentance, and therefore full of Danger, and the utmoſt Hazard, yet it was

not

not wholly impoſſible to be true, nor ab
lutely deſperate.

THAT it was hugely dangerous, and of t
utmoſt hazard to defer it ſo long, muſt ne
be granted by all wiſe and conſiderate Me
I wiſh all Men were ſo wiſe as ſeriouſly
conſider it, and provide for it.

FOR ſhould God have ſnatched hi
away in the very Act of Sin, and that, li
ZIMRI and COSBI, DATHAN and ABIRA
ANANIAS and SAPPHIRA, he had gone do
quick into Hell; yet we muſt have ackno
ledged, that *righteous art thou, O Lord, c
clear when thou art judged.* If God h
taken him from the Land of the Living, eit
by ſome ſudden Accident, by a raging Fev
or by ſome ſtupid Lethargy or Apople
when he had had no time for Reflection
Repentance; in what a dreadful Conditi
had his Soul been for ever? Or if God h
vouchſafed him (as he did) ſome ſharp ling
ing Sickneſs, when he might have had leiſ
to repent; yet what Aſſurance was there th
ſuch a Repentance would have followed; C
if it had, that it would have been accepte
Was it not more likely that he would ſt
have cried, with the wiſe Man's Slugga
Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, till pover
a diſmal Poverty, *came upon him?*

BUT if he had reſolved at that time
break off his Sins by Repentance, yet, ala
how improper a time was that for it? It
not eaſy to be preſent and conſiſtent to ou
ſelves, when we are ſurrounded with diſquie

if not ſtupifying Pains, when there is a ceſſary decay and dulneſs of Spirits, a ſhort mory, flat and low Affections; and at the e time, a more than ordinary hurry and charge of worldly Buſineſs; a Houſe to be in Order; Children to be provided for in ir Fortunes and Education; Creditors to ſatisfied; and all this amidſt the Cries and ournings of our neareſt Relations and ends about us. And certainly we muſt nk Repentance a very eaſy Taſk, if we kon ordinarily, that he that is diſabled m all other Things elſe, ſhall yet be fit to rfect and complete it.

But allowing our Thoughts to be as clear clearer in our Sickneſs, than in our calmeſt d ſtrongeſt Seaſons, (which yet I think no an in his Wits will believe) yet after all, hat Security have we that we ſhall be able improve or employ it to a true Repentance? may be, before we come to that, the mea- re of our Iniquities is filled up already, and e irreverſible Sentence is gone out, though t executed againſt us: My Patience *ſhall always ſtrive* (ὐ μὴ καλαμείνη, as the LXX) *ith men. Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ound?* It may be curſed and devoted, ough we do not ſee it actually withered d deſtroyed.

But ſuppoſing this alſo, that we are allowed farther time and means for Repentance; yet, as! no ordinary Means will ſerve us, when e have been thus hardened by cuſtomary Sin- ing: and I am ſure, ſhould God proceed ith us by the meaſure of ſtrict Juſtice, he might

might rather take from us even that which we have, than give us any extraordinary Assistances which we have so abused.

And after all this, if God shall give us such extraordinary Assistances, whatever Allowances God may make, yet there is still no certain Security or Comfort to any dying Death-bed Penitent; *Charity hopeth all things and believeth all things*; and the Relaxations of the Censures of the Church in Absolution of probable Signs of Repentance, must follow the Judgment of Charity; yet the Certainty of the Sinner's Absolution with God in Heaven, depends only upon the inward real sincerity of his Repentance, and consequently upon the approving of it by his future Conversation; and therefore God Almighty only who knows what the one is at present, and what the other will be, can be a competent Judge of it. And certainly, it is enough for such a Penitent, if he be secured at last of entring into the Kingdom of Heaven, though he has very rarely, if at all, the present comfortable Experience and Assurance of it on a Death-bed Repentance, which indeed is reserved as the Reward of a constant virtuous and holy Life.

But though what I have said be enough to conclude a Death-bed Repentance infinitely hazardous, and therefore hugely unfit for any wise Man to depend upon; yet will it not be sufficient to prove it absolutely impossible. No sober Man certainly would hazard his Life upon the chance of a Die, when it is a thou-

nd to one but he miſcarries; or venture nto a crazy Cock-boat out of a ſound Ship, hen it is but barely poſſible he may be ſaved; nd yet no wiſe Man neither but will allow a oſſibility of being ſaved both by the one and ne other: and it it only the bare Poſſibility f a Death-bed Repentance, that I am now leading for.

AND that this Poſſibility was produced into ct, and ſo rendered very probable alſo, in he Caſe of this Perſon here before us, will eſt be judged by the Marks I am now to give ou of the Sincerity of his Repentance; for hich I am in the next place to account.

Thirdly, AND it was the Power of the Divine Grace, and of that only, that brake through ll theſe Obſtacles that I have now mentioned; hat God (who is a God of infinite Compaſſion nd Forbearance) allowed him leiſure and opportunity for Repentance; that he awakened im from his ſpiritual Slumber by a pungent ickneſs; that he gave him ſuch a Preſence f Mind, as both to provide prudently for is worldly Affairs, and yet not be diſtracted r diverted by them from the Thoughts of a etter World; that he lengthened out his ay of Grace, and accompanied the ordinary eans of Salvation, and the weak Miniſtry f his Word, with the convincing and overuling Power of his Spirit to his Conſcience; hich Word of God became to him *quick nd powerful, ſharper than any two-edged ſword, iercing even to the dividing aſunder of his oul and ſpirit*; and at laſt the *Spirit of God* wit-

witneſſeth to his ſpirit, that now he was become *one of the children of God.*

Now if the Thief upon the Croſs (an Inſtance too much abuſed) was therefore accepted, becauſe accompanied with all the Effects of a ſincere Convert, which his Condition was capable of; as Confeſſion of Chriſt in the midſt of the Blaſphemies of the Phariſees, and his own lewd Companions, and deſertion even of Chriſt's Diſciples; if his Repentance be therefore judged real, becauſe he ſeems to be more concerned in the Remembrance of Chriſt's future Kingdom than his own Death; if St. PAUL was approved by the ſame more abundant Labours which he commended in the *Corinthians*, *yea, what zeal? what fear? what vehement deſire?* 2 Cor. vii. 11. I think I ſhall make it appear that the Repentance of this Perſon was accompanied with the like hopeful Symptoms: and I am ſo ſenſible of that awful Preſence, both of God and Man, before whom I ſpeak, who are eaſily able to diſcover my Failings, that I ſhall not deliver any thing, but what I know to be a ſtrict and religious Truth.

UPON my firſt Viſit to him, (*May* 26.) juſt at his return from his Journey out of the Weſt, he moſt gladly received me, ſhewed me extraordinary Reſpect upon the ſcore of mine Office, "thanked God, who had in Mercy "and good Providence ſent me to him, "who ſo much needed my Prayers and Coun- "ſels; and acknowledging how unwor- "thily heretofore he had treated that Order

"of

of Men, reproaching them that they were Proud, and propheſied only for Rewards; but now he had learnt how to value them; that he eſteemed them the Servants of the moſt High God, who were to ſhew to him the Way to everlaſting Life."

At the ſame time I found him labouring nder ſtrange Trouble and Conflicts of Mind, is Spirit wounded, and his Conſcience full of errors. Upon his Journey, he told me, he had been arguing with greater vigour againſt God and Religion, than ever he had done in his life-time before, and that he was reſolved to run them down with all the Argument and Spite in the World;" ut, like the great Convert St. PAUL, *he ound it hard to kick againſt the pricks.* For God at that time had ſo ſtruck his Heart by is immediate Hand, that preſently he argued s ſtrongly for God and Virtue, as before he ad done againſt it. That God ſtrangely pened his Heart, creating in his Mind moſt wful and tremendous Thoughts and Ideas of he Divine Majeſty, with a delightful Con-emplation of the Divine Nature and Attri-utes, and of the Lovelineſs of Religion and Virtue. "I never, ſaid he, was advanced "thus far towards Happineſs in my life be-"fore, though upon the Commiſſion of ſome "Sins extraordinary, I have had ſome checks "and warnings conſiderable from within, "but ſtill ſtruggled with them, and ſo wore "them off again. The moſt obſervable that I "remember was this: One day at an Atheiſti-

" cal Meeting, at a Perſon of Quality's,
" undertook to manage the Cauſe, and wa
" the principal Diſputant againſt God an
" Piety, and for my Performances receive
" the Applauſe of the whole Company: upo
" which my Mind was terribly ſtruck, and
" immediately applied thus to myſelf. Goo
" God! that a Man that walks upright, tha
" ſees the wonderful Works of God, and ha
" the uſe of his Senſes and Reaſon, ſhould n
" them to the defying of his Creator! But tho
" this was a good Beginning towards my Con
" verſion, to find my Conſcience touched fo
" my Sins, yet it went off again; nay, all m
" Life long, I had a ſecret value and reve
" rence for an honeſt Man, and loved Mo
" rality in others. But I had formed an od
" Scheme of Religion to myſelf, which woul
" ſolve all that God and Conſcience migh
" force upon me; yet I was not ever well re
" conciled to the Buſineſs of Chriſtianity, no
" had that Reverence for the Goſpel of Chri
" as I ought to have." Which eſtate o
Mind continued till the liiid. Chapter o
Iſaiah was read to him, (wherein there is
lively deſcription of the Sufferings of ou
Saviour, and the Benefits thereof) and ſom
other Portions of Scripture; by the powe
and efficacy of which Word, aſſiſted by hi
Holy Spirit, God ſo wrought upon his Heart,
that he declared that " the Myſteries of the
" Paſſion appeared as clear and plain to him,
" as ever any thing did that was repreſented in
" a Glaſs:" So that the Joy and Admiration,

which

hich poſſeſſed his Soul upon reading God's Word to him, was remarkable to all about im; and he had ſo much delight in his Teſtmonies, that in my Abſence, he begged his Mother and Lady to read the ſame to him requently, and was unſatisfied (notwithanding his great Pains and Weakneſs) till e had learned the liiid. of ISAIAH without book.

AT the ſame time, diſcourſing of his manner of Life from his Youth up, and which all Men knew was too much devoted to the *ſervice of ſin*, and that the *luſts of the fleſh, of the ye, and the pride of life*, had captivated him: He was very large and particular in his Acknowledgments about it, more ready to accuſe himſelf than I or any one elſe can be: publicly crying out, "O bleſſed God, can ſuch a "horrid Creature as I am be accepted by "thee, who has denied thy Being, and con"temned thy Power?" Aſking often, "Can "there be Mercy and Pardon for me? Will "God own ſuch a Wretch as I?" And in the middle of his Sickneſs ſaid, "Shall the un"ſpeakable Joys of Heaven be conferred on "me? O mighty Saviour! never, but thro' "thine infinite Love and Satisfaction! O "never, but by the Purchaſe of thy Blood!" adding, "that with all abhorrency he did re"flect upon his former Life; that ſincerely, "and from his Heart, he did repent of all "that Folly and Madneſs which he had com"mitted."

INDEED he had a true and lively Senſe o
God's great Mercy to him in ſtriking his har
Heart, and laying his Conſcience open, whic
hitherto was deaf to all God's Calls an
Methods; ſaying, "If that God that die
"for great as well as leſſer Sinners, did no
"ſpeedily apply his infinite Merits to hi
"poor Soul, his wound was ſuch as no ma
"could conceive or bear." Crying out, "tha
"he was the vileſt Wretch and Dog that th
"Sun ſhined upon, or the Earth bore; tha
"now he ſaw his Error in not living up t
"that Reaſon which God endued him with
"and which he unworthily vilified and con
"temned;" wiſhed he "had been a ſtarvin
"Leper crawling in a Ditch;" that he "ha
"been a Link-boy or a Beggar, or for hi
"whole life-time confined to a Dungeon, ra
"ther than thus to have ſinned againſt hi
"God!"

How remarkable was his Faith, in a heart
embracing and devout Confeſſion of all th
Articles of our Chriſtian Religion, and all th
divine Myſteries of the Goſpel? ſaying, tha
"that abſurd and fooliſh Philoſophy, whic
"the World ſo much admired, propagate
"by the late Mr. HOBBES, and others, ha
"undone him, and many more of the be
"Parts in the Nation;" who, without God'
great Mercy to them, may never, I believe
attain ſuch a Repentance.

I muſt not omit to mention his faithful ad
herence to, and caſting himſelf entirely upon
the Mercies of Jeſus Chriſt, and the fre

Grac

Grace of God, declared to repenting Sinners through him; with a thankful Remembrance of his Life, Death, and Reſurrection; begging *God to ſtrengthen his faith*, and often crying out, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

His mighty love and eſteem of the Holy Scriptures, his reſolution to read them frequently, and meditate upon them, if God ſhould ſpare him, having already taſted the good Word; for having ſpoken to his Heart, he acknowledged, "all the ſeeming abſurdities and contradictions thereof, fancied by "Men of corrupt and reprobate Judgments, "were vaniſhed, and the excellency and "beauty appeared, being come to receive "the Truth in the love of it."

His extraordinary fervent Devotions, and his own frequent Prayers, were moſt excellent and correct; amongſt the reſt, for the King, in ſuch a manner as became a dutiful Subject, and a truly grateful Servant; for the Church and Nation, for ſome particular Relations, and then for all Men; his calling frequently upon me at all Hours to pray with him, or read the Scriptures to him; and towards the End of his Sick, would heartily deſire "God to pardon his Infirmities, if he "ſhould not be ſo wakeful and intent through "the whole Duty as he wiſhed to be;" and that "though the Fleſh was weak, yet the "Spirit was willing; and hoped God would "accept that."

His continual invocation of God's Grac and holy Spirit to ſuſtain him, to keep hi from all evil Thoughts, from all Tempta tions and diabolical Suggeſtions, and ever thing which might be prejudicial to that reli gious Temper of Mind, which God had no ſo happily endued him withal: crying ou one night eſpecially, "how terribly th "Tempter did aſſault him, by caſting upo "him lewd and wicked Imaginations: but "thank God, ſaid he, I abhor them all "by the Power of his Grace, which I an "ſure is ſufficient for me, I have overcom "them; it is the Malice of the Devil, be "cauſe I am reſcued from him; and th "Goodneſs of God, that frees me from al "my ſpiritual Enemies."

His great Joy at his Lady's converſion from Popery to the Church of *England* (being, a he termed it, *A Faction ſupported only by Frau and Cruelty*) which was by her done with De liberation and mature Judgment; the dar Miſts of which having been for ſome Month before breaking away, were now cleared, b her receiving the bleſſed Sacrament with he dying Huſband, at the receiving of which n Man could expreſs more Joy and Devotion than he did; and having experienced the Word of Life, and ſeen the Salvation o God, in the Preparation of his Mind, he wa now ready *to depart in Peace*.

His hearty Concern for the pious Educatio of his Children, wiſhing that his "*Son might* "*never be a Wit*," that is, (as he himſelf ex-

plained

ained it) " one of thoſe wretched Crea-
tures, who pride themſelves in abuſing
God and Religion, denying his Being, or
his Providence; but that he might become
an honeſt and religious Man, which could
only be the Support and Bleſſing of his Fa-
mily;" complaining, " what a vicious and
naughty World they were brought into;"
nd that " no Fortunes or Honours were
comparable to the Love and Favour of
God to them:" in whoſe Name he bleſſed
em, prayed for them, and committed them
o his Protection.

His ſtrict charge to thoſe Perſons, in whoſe
uſtody his Papers were, " to burn all his pro-
fane and lewd Writings, as being only fit to
promote Vice and Immorality, by which he
had ſo highly offended God, and ſhamed
and blaſphemed that holy Religion into
which he had been Baptized; and all his
obſcene and filthy Pictures, which were ſo
notoriouſly ſcandalous."

His readineſs to make Reſtitution to the
tmoſt of his Power to all Perſons whom he
ad injured; and for thoſe whom he could
ot make a Compenſation to, he prayed for
God's and their Pardon. His remarkable
uſtice in taking all poſſible care for the Pay-
ent of his Debts, which, before, he confeſſed
e had not ſo fairly and effectually done.

His readineſs to forgive all Injuries done
gainſt him, ſome more particularly mentioned,
which were great and provoking; nay, an-
exing thereto all the Aſſurance of a future

Friendſhip, and hoping he ſhould be as free
forgiven at the Hand of God.

How tender and concerned was he for h
Servants about him in his Extremities, (mani
feſted by the Beneficence of his Will to them
pitying their Troubles in watching with him
and attending him, treating them with Can
dour and Kindneſs, as if they had been h
Intimates!

How hearty were his Endeavours to b
ſerviceable to thoſe about him, exhortin
them to *the fear and love of God, and*
make a good uſe of his Forbearance and Long
ſuffering to Sinners, which ſhould lead them
Repentance. And here I muſt not paſs by hi
pious and moſt paſſionate Exclamation to
Gentleman of ſome Character, who came t
viſit him upon his Death-bed: "O remem
"ber that you contemn God no more, he i
"an avenging God, and will viſit you fo
"your Sins; he will in Mercy, I hope, touch
"your Conſcience ſooner or later, as he ha
"done mine: You and I have been Friend
"and Sinners together a great while, there
"fore I am the more free with you: We
"have been all miſtaken in our Conceits an
"Opinions, our Perſuaſions have been falſe
"and groundleſs, therefore God grant yo
"Repentance." And ſeeing him the nex
Day again, he ſaid to him, "Perhaps you
"were diſobliged by my plainneſs to you
"Yeſterday; I ſpake the Words of Truth
"and Soberneſs to you," and (ſtriking hi
Hand

Hand upon his Breaſt) ſaid, "I hope God "will touch your Heart."

LIKEWISE his commands to me, "to "preach abroad and to let all Men know (if "they knew it not already) how ſeverely God "had diſciplined him for his Sins by his afflict-"ing Hand; that his Sufferings were moſt juſt, "though he had laid ten thouſand times more "upon him; how he had laid one ſtripe upon "another becauſe of his grievous Provoca-"tions, till he had brought him home to him-"ſelf; that in his former Viſitations, they "had not that bleſſed effect he was now ſen-"ſible of. He had formerly ſome looſe "Thoughts and ſlight Reſolutions of reform-"ing, and deſigned to be better, becauſe "even the preſent Conſequences of Sin were "ſtill peſtering him, and were ſo trouble-"ſome and inconvenient to him; but that "now he had other ſentiments of Things, "and acted upon other Principles."

HIS willingneſs to die if it pleaſed God, "reſigning himſelf always to the divine Diſ-"poſal; but if God ſhould ſpare him yet a "longer time here, he hoped to bring Glory "to the Name of God, in the whole courſe "of his Life, and particularly by his Endea-"vours to convince others, and to aſſure "them of the Danger of their Condition, if "they continued impenitent; and how gra-"ciouſly God had dealt with him."

HIS great Senſe of his Obligations to thoſe excellent Men, the Right Reverend my Lord Biſhop of OXFORD, and Dr. MARSHALL, for their charitable and frequent Viſits to him, and Prayers with him; and Dr. BURNET, who

came on purpose from *London* to see him, who were all very serviceable to his Repentance.

His extraordinary Duty and Reverence to his Mother, with all the grateful Respects to her imaginable, and Kindness to his good Lady, beyond expression, (which may well enhance such a Loss to them) and to his Children, obliging them with all the endearments that a good Husband or tender Father could bestow.

To conclude these Remarks, I shall only read to you his dying Remonstrance, sufficiently attested, and signed by his own Hand, as his truest Sense, (which I hope may be useful for that good End he designed it) in Manner and Form following.

"FOR the Benefit of all those whom I "may have drawn into Sin by my Ex- "ample and Encouragement, I leave to the "World this my last Declaration, which I "deliver in the Presence of the great God, who "knows the Secrets of all Hearts, and before "whom I am now appearing to be judged.

"THAT from the bottom of my Soul I detest "and abhor the whole Course of my former "wicked Life; that I think I can never suffici- "ently admire the Goodness of God, who has "given me a true Sense of my pernicious O- "pinions and vile Practices, by which I have "hitherto lived without Hope, and without "God in the World; have been an open "Enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost "despite to the Holy Spirit of Grace. And "that the greatest Testimony of my Charity to

" to ſuch is, to warn them in the Name of " God, and as they regard the Welfare of " their immortal Souls, no more to deny his " Being, or his Providence, or deſpiſe his " Goodneſs; no more to make a Mock at " Sin, or contemn the pure and excellent Re- " ligion of my ever bleſſed Redeemer, through " whoſe Merits alone, I, one of the greateſt " of Sinners, do yet hope for Mercy and " Forgiveneſs. *Amen.*"

[Declared and Signed in the Preſence of]

Anne Rocheſter.
Robert Parſons.

JUNE 19, 1680. J. ROCHESTER.

AND now I cannot but mention with Joy and Admiration that ſteady Temper of Mind, which he enjoyed through the whole courſe of his Sickneſs and Repentance; which muſt proceed, not from a hurry and perturbation of Mind or Body, ariſing from the fear of Death, or dread of Hell only, but from an ingenuous love to God, and an uniform regard to Virtue, (ſuitable to that ſolemn Declaration of his, *I would not commit the leaſt Sin to gain a Kingdom*;) with all poſſible Symptoms of a laſting Perſeverance in it, if God ſhould have reſtored him. To which may be added, his comfortable Perſuaſions of God's accepting him to his Mercy, ſaying three or four Days before his Death, " I ſhall die, " but O, what unſpeakable Glories do I ſee! " what Joys, beyond Thought or Expreſ- " ſion, am I ſenſible of! I am aſſured of " God's Mercy to me thro' Jeſus Chriſt.

" O how do I long to die; and to be with
" my Saviour!"

THE time of his Sickneſs and Repentance was juſt nine Weeks; in all which time he was ſo much maſter of his Reaſon, and had ſo clear an Underſtanding, (ſaving 30 Hours, about the middle of it, in which he was delirious) that he never dictated or ſpoke more compoſed in his Life: and therefore if any ſhall continue to ſay his Piety was the Effect of Madneſs or Vapours; let me tell them it is highly diſingenuous, and that the Aſſertion is as ſilly as it is wicked. And moreover that the force of what I have delivered may not be evaded by wicked Men, who are reſolved to harden their Hearts, maugre all Convictions, by ſaying, *This Thing was done in a Corner*; I appeal, for the Truth thereof, to all ſorts of Perſons, who in conſiderable Numbers viſited and attended him, and more particularly to thoſe eminent Phyſicians who were near him, and converſant with him in the whole courſe of his tedious Sickneſs; and who, if any, are competent judges of a Phrenſy or Delirium.

THERE are many more excellent Things in my Abſence, which have occaſionally dropt from his Mouth, that will not come within the narrow compaſs of a Sermon; but theſe, I hope, will ſufficiently prove what I produce them for. And if any ſhall be ſtill unſatisfied herein in this hard-hearted Generation, it matters not, let them at their coſt be Unbelievers ſtill, ſo long as this excelleut Penitent enjoys the comfort of his Repentance. And now from all theſe admirable Signs we have great Reaſon to believe comfortably, that his Repentance was real, and

his End happy; and accordingly imitate the Neighbours and Couſins of ELIZABETH, who, *when they heard how the Lord had ſhewn great Mercy upon her, came and rejoiced with her*, Luke i. 58.

FOR ſo we muſt learn, like the Ambaſſadors to ſome new Prince, to turn our Condolences into Congratulations, in conformity to an heavenly Example; *For there is joy in heaven over one Sinner that repents.*

I. A joy to *God the Father*, who has ſolemnly ſworn, that he *delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live; who would have all men be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*

II. A joy to *God the Son*, that good Shepherd, mentioned in the Verſe before my Text, who *left the ninety and nine* juſt Perſons *in the wilderneſs, and went after that which was loſt, till he had found it; and when he had found it, he laid it on his ſhoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home he calls together his friends and his neighbours* (on Heaven and Earth) *ſaying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my ſheep which was loſt.*

III. A joy to *God the Holy Ghoſt*, after he had been ſo often *grieved*, ſo *deſpitefully treated*, and ſo long *reſiſted.*

AND, IV. A joy to the whole Court in Heaven, *in the preſence of the Holy Angels*, ver. 10. thoſe *miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter to thoſe who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*; to ſee that now at laſt, *their labour is not in vain in the Lord*, but that there is one more Subject gained to the obedience of their and our common

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mon Lord, delivered from the Slavery, and admitted to fill up the Vacancy of Apoſtate Spirits.

AND as our πολίτευμα, our proper and natural Citizenſhip, or *Converſation, is in Heaven*; ſo ſhould our joys too be conformable to thoſe of our Fellow-citizens. And therefore, after the Relations and Friends of this great Perſon have paid their natural tribute of Tears to ſo near a Relation, they ſhould then turn their Sorrows into Joy, by the comfortable Conſideration of his being a Penitent upon Earth, and a Saint in Heaven.

I. THUS his dear Mother ſhould rejoice, that the Son of her love and of her fears, as well as of her bowels, is now born again into a better World; adopted by his heavenly Father, and gone before her to take Poſſeſſion of an eternal Inheritance.

II. His truly loving Conſort ſhould rejoice, that God has been ſo gracious to them both, as at the ſame time to give him a ſight of his Errors in Point of Practice, and herſelf (not altogether without his means and endeavours) a ſight of hers in point of Faith. And truly, conſidering the great Prejudices and Dangers of the *Roman* Religion, I think I may aver, that there is Joy in Heaven, and ſhould be on Earth, for Her Converſion as well as His.

III. His noble and moſt hopeful Iſſue ſhould rejoice, as their Years are capable; not that a dear and loving Father has left them, but that ſince he muſt leave them, he has left them the Example of a Penitent, and not of a Sinner; the Bleſſing of a Saint, in recommending them

hem to an All-ſufficient Father, and not en-iling on them the fatal Curſe that attends he Poſterity of the Wicked and Impenitent.

IV. ALL good Men ſhould rejoice, to ſee he triumphs of the Croſs in theſe latter Days, nd the Works of Divine Wiſdom and Power. And bad Men certainly, whenever they conſi-er it, are moſt of all concerned to joy and ejoice in it, as a condemned Malefactor is, o hear that a Fellow-criminal has got his Pardon, and that he may do ſo too, if he peedily ſue for it.

AND this Joy of all will ſtill be the greater, f we compare it with the Joy there is in the Caſe of juſt Perſons, that need no Repentance, viz. that need not ſuch a ſolemn extraordinary Repentance, or the whole change of Heart and Mind, as great Sinners do: and of this my Text pronounces, that there is *greater joy in heaven, over one* ſuch *Sinner that* truly *re-penteth, than there is over ninety and nine juſt perſons that need* not *ſuch a repentance.* And the reaſon we may conceive to be this; that ſince all Joy ariſes from Admiration and Sur-prize, as from ſomething that is new and un-expected; accordingly, the Joy that proceeds from the Repentance and new Life of a no-torious Sinner, muſt needs be greater than that which ariſes from the conſtant Piety of a good Man, which we have ſeen every Day; as a Reſurrection from the Dead is more remarkable than our firſt Life. Beſides that ſuch a Penitent's former Failings, are ordi-narily the occaſion of a greater and more active Piety afterwards; as our Convert ear-neſtly

neſtly wiſhed, "That God would be pleaſed "to ſpare him but one year more, that in "that he might honour his Name propor- "tionably to the diſhonour done to God in "his whole Life paſt." And we ſee St. PAUL *laboured more abundantly* than all the Apoſtles in the Planting of the Church, becauſe he had raged moſt furiouſly before in the Deſtruction of it; and our Saviour himſelf tells us, that *to whom much is forgiven, they will love much, but to whom little is forgiven, they will love little*; and we know a Commander will love a Soldier more that redeems his former cowardice, by doing ſome brave and daring Action, than him, who never had that taint upon him, but yet never atchieved any thing remarkable. A Huſbandman more rejoices at the Improvement of Briars and Thorns into an excellent Crop, from which once he had but little expectation, than for ſuch a Soil as was remarkable neither for the one or the other.

IT is certainly the moſt ſafe, indeed the only ſafe way, to be conſtantly virtuous; and he that is wiſe indeed, that is, *wiſe unto ſalvation*, will endeavour to be one of thoſe that *need no repentance*; I mean that entire and whole Work of beginning anew, but will draw out the ſame Thread through his whole Life, and not let the Sun go down upon any of his Sins: but then the other Repentance is more remarkable, and, where it is real, the more effectual, to produce a fervent and a fruitful Piety; beſides, the greater Glory to God in the Influence of the Example.

Which

Which may probably be a farther Reaſon of the exceſſive joy of Angels at the Converſion of ſuch a Sinner; becauſe they, who are better acquainted with Human Nature than we; and knowing it apt, like the Phariſees, to demand a Sign from Heaven, for the Reformation of corrupted Cuſtoms; they diſcern too, that ſuch deſperate ſpiritual Recoveries, will ſeem ſo many Openings of the Heavens in the Deſcent of the holy Dove, viſibly to the Standers-by; and accordingly will have the greater influence upon them. And it is this, in the laſt Place, that I am to recommend to all that hear me this Day.

And having thus diſcharged the Office of an Hiſtorian, in a faithful Repreſentation of the Repentance and Converſion of this great Sinner; give me leave now to beſpeak you as an Ambaſſador of Chriſt, and in his Name earneſtly *perſuade you to be reconciled to Him*, and to follow this illuſtrious Perſon, not in his Sins any more, but in his Sorrows for them, and his forſaking them. I hope better things of you, my Brethren, than to think that all that now hear me, have need of ſuch a Repentance, though all have need of ſome, and the beſt are moſt ſenſible of it. But if there be any in this place, or elſewhere, who have been drawn into a complacency or practice of any kind of Sin from his Example, let thoſe eſpecially be perſuaded *to break off their Sins by Repentance*, by the ſame Example, that as he has been *for the fall*, ſo he may be now *for the riſing again of many in Iſrael*. God knows, there are too many that are wiſe enough

enough to diſcern and follow the Example of Evil, but to do Good from good Example they have no Power: Such as theſe I would beſeech, in their cooler Seaſons, to aſk themſelves that Queſtion, *What Fruit had ye in thoſe things whereof yé are now aſhamed, for the End of thoſe things is Death?* And if any encourage themſelves in their Wickedneſs from this Example, reſolving however to enjoy the good Things that are preſent; *to fill themſelves with coſtly Wine, and to let no part of Pleaſure paſs by them* untaſted; ſuppoſing, with the Goſpel rich Man, that when *one comes to them from the Dead*, when Sickneſs or old Age approaches, that then *they will repent*; let ſuch as theſe conſider the dreadful hazard they run by ſuch pernicious Counſels. It may be (and it is but juſt with God it ſhould be) that whilſt they are making *proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof*, and are ſaying to their Souls, *Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years*; therefore, *take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*; perhaps juſt then, at the ſame time the Hand of God may be writing upon the Walls of their Habitations that fatal Sentence, *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, and then whoſe ſhall all thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided?* And what ſad Reflections muſt ſuch a one needs make upon his own Folly, when he ſees that all that Mirth and Eaſe, which he has promiſed himſelf for ſo many Years, muſt be at an end in a very few Hours: and not only ſo, but that Mirth turned into Howlings, and that Eaſe into a bed of Flames; when the Soul muſt

nuſt be torn away on a ſudden from the Things
loved, and go where it will hate to live, and
et cannot die. And were it not better for us
o embrace cordially the *things which belong to*
ur everlaſting *peace*, before *they are hid from*
ur eyes? Were it not better for us all to be
wiſe betimes, by preventing ſuch a Danger,
han to open our Eyes, as the unhappy rich
Man did, when we are in the Place of Torment?

Be perſuaded then with humble, penitent,
nd obedient Hearts, to go out of your ſinful
elves, and meet the bleſſed *Jeſus*, who is now
n the Way, and comes to us in the Perſon
nd in the Bowels of a Saviour, wooing us to
ccept thoſe eaſy Conditions of Pardon and
eace offered in his Holy Goſpel, rather than
ay till he become our Adverſary and our
udge too, when he will *deliver us over to the*
ormentors, till we have paid the utmoſt farthing,
. e. to all eternity: when thoſe who have
nade a Mock at Sin all their Lives, and
aughed at the pretended Cheats of Religion
nd its Prieſts, ſhall find themſelves at laſt
he greateſt Fools, and the moſt ſadly cheated
n the World; for God will then *laugh at*
their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh;
when it cometh as deſolation, and their deſtruction
as a whirlwind. And ſince they would not
ſuffer his Mercy to rejoice over his Juſtice,
nor cauſe any joy in Heaven, as the Text
mentions, in their Converſion; his Juſtice
will certainly rejoice over his Mercy, and cauſe
joy in Heaven, (as it did at the fall of *Babylon*,
which *would not be cured*, Rev. xix. 1.) at
their Confuſion. And O that there were

ſuch

ſuch a Heart in them, that they would conſider this betimes, that in the midſt of their carnal Jollities, they would but vouchſafe to regard what may happen hereafter, and what will certainly be the End of theſe Things. For however the Fruits of Sin may ſeem *pleaſant to the Eye, and to be deſired, to make one* ſeem *wiſe* and *witty* to the World; yet alas! they are all but empty and unſatisfactory at preſent, and leave a mortal Sting behind them, and *bitterneſs in the latter end*; like the Book St. JOHN eat, *Rev.* x. 10. *which in his mouth was ſweet as honey, but as ſoon as he had eaten it his belly was bitter.* And though God ſhould pleaſe at laſt to bring Men back in their old age from their ſinful Courſes, by a *way of weeping*, to pluck them as *firebrands* out of *everlaſting burnings*; yet if Men conſider how rare and difficult a Thing it is to *be born again when one is old*, how many pangs and violences to Nature there muſt needs be, to put off the habits and inclinations to old Sins; as difficult (ſaith the Prophet) *as for the Leopard to change his ſpots, or the Ethiopian his ſkin*; and then when that is done, what Scars and Weakneſſes even a Cure muſt leave behind; I ſay, he that duly conſiders this, will think it better to ſecure his Salvation, and all his preſent true Comforts, by preſerving his Innocency, or alleviating his Work by a daily Repentance for leſſer Failings, than to venture upon one ſingle chance of a Death-bed Repentance; which is no more to be depended upon, for the performance or acceptance, than it can encourage any Man not to labour, becauſe ELIAS was

fed

ed by Ravens, or the *Iſraelites* with Manna rom heaven.

If then there be any (though alas that need ot be aſked) that have made the greatneſs of heir Wit, or Birth, or Fortune, *Inſtruments f iniquity to iniquity*; let them now convert hem, in their own Converſion, to that original oble uſe for which God intended them, *viz.* o be *Inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto holineſs.*

To theſe eſpecially that are thus great, not nly God, but this great Perſon alſo, by my Mouth, *being dead yet ſpeaketh*; for as St. Paul ſeemed more eſpecially concerned for is Brethren and Kinſmen according to the Fleſh; and even the rich Man in Hell, though ufficiently diſtracted by his own Sufferings, et ſeems hugely deſirous that one might be ent from the Dead to his Brethren, that he ight *teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into hat place of torment*: ſo this illuſtrious Convert, after God had opened his Eyes to ſee his Follies, was more eſpecially deſirous of the Salvation of thoſe that were his Brethren, hough not in the Fleſh, yet in the greatneſs of their Quality, and of their Sins; paſſionately wiſhing, *that all ſuch, were not only almoſt, but altogether ſuch as he now was*, ſaving his bodily Afflictions; and of great force, methinks, hould the Admonitions of a dying Friend be. The ingenious Michael de Montaigne eckons him the beſt Phyſician, who himſelf has had the Diſeaſe which he pretends to cure; and behold, a greater than he ſays to St. Peter, *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren*; which aſſures us, that they which themſelves

themſelves have been in a Condition to nee
a remarkable Converſion, are not incapabl
thereby, but obliged, and the better qualifie
for ſuch a charitable Work.

Now theſe eſpecially I would beſeech, a
the Miniſter of Chriſt, and as ſuch, *thoug*
we are reviled we bleſs, though we are defam
we intreat, to *ſuffer the word of exhortation*; th
they would not terminate their Eyes upon th
outward Pomp and Pageantry that attend
them, as the vulgar *Jews* did upon their Rit
and Ceremonies; but (as the wiſer *Iſraelite*
who eſteemed thoſe glittering formalities as th
Types and Images of heavenly Things) b
quickened by them to the ambition of origin
Honours, and future Glory. How much wer
it to be wiſhed, that ſuch Perſons eſpeciall
would be followers of God and Goodneſs
ſince, whether they will or no, Men will b
followers of them; all of them, according t
their reſpective Magnitudes, like Stars, caſt
ing a good or bad influence upon their Infe
riors; and not only ſo, but oftentimes upo
their Superiors too; as the corrupt Blood i
the Feet, in the Courſe of its Circulation
after ſome time, paſſes upwards into the Hea

It is true, an eminent Station is liable t
ſeveral miſchiefs, from which a mean Conditio
is free; but the God of order, who has mad
Dignity in Place, and Affluence of Riches ne
ceſſary to the World, has proportioned his Sup
ports; and if the incitements to *Sin do abou*
unto the rich and noble, *the Grace of God*,
they are careful to improve it, *will much mo*
abound, both to God's glory, and their own

Thu

Thus if the Temptations of great Persons be more, and greater than those of Inferiors; their Abilities and Understandings are ordinarily greater too: and if they lie more open to the Assaults of the Devil, they have generally greater Sagacity to foresee the Danger, and more powerful Assistances to go through it. Nor is Piety inconsistent with Greatness, any more than it is with Policy, but is the best Foundation and Security both to the one and the other. The breeding of MOSES at Court, without doubt, contributed much even to his religious Performances, at least so far, as to make them more useful and exemplary to others: but then he was sincerely virtuous all the while, as well whilst reputed the Son of PHARAOH's Daughter, as JETHRO's Son-in-law. The Prophet ISAIAH was Nephew to a King, and bred, as is supposed, in the Court; whence we may observe, his Stile is more majestic than the other Prophets; as that of the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, who was bred at the Feet of GAMALIEL, is than the other Apostles; God making use of the natural Temper and Educations of Men, to be assisting to supernatural Purposes.

WE find Christians in CESAR's Household, as soon as any where else in *Rome*; and when Christianity had once gained CONSTANTINE, it spread itself farther over the Empire in a few Years, than before it had done in some Centuries: as Waters running downwards spread themselves freer, than when forced upwards against Nature. Since then so much good or mischief depends upon illustrious Examples, will it not better become Men to draw the Multi-

tude after them to Heaven by their Piety than by infectious Guilt to be at the head of a miſerable Company of the Damned?

It is this Piety, a timely and exemplary Piety, that will perpetuate to Men of Birth and Fortune their Honours, and their Eſtates too; as well by deriving on them the Bleſſing of God, who is the true Fountain of Honour, as by creating an awe and a reverence for them from all orders of Men, even to many Generations; a reverence which will be freſh and laſting, when all the Trophies of Wit and Gaiety are laid in the Duſt. It is this Piety that will be the guide of their Youth, and the comfort of their Age; for *length of Days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.* It is this, and this only, that can make all outward Bleſſings comfortable, and indeed Bleſſings to us, by making them the ſteps and means of attaining the never-fading Honours and incomprehenſible Glories of that Kingdom which is above, where there ſhall be no more Sin, nor Sickneſs, nor Pains, nor Tears, nor Death; but we ſhall reſt from all our Labours, and our Works ſhall follow us.

Unto which, *God of his infinite Mercy bring us, for the Merits and for the Mediation of* Jeſus Chriſt *our Saviour; to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, let us aſcribe all Praiſe and Adoration, now and for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

9.

A PASTORAL LETTER FROM A MINISTER TO HIS PARISHIONERS;

BEING AN

Earneſt EXHORTATION to them, to take Care of their SOULS;

AND

A PREPARATIVE, in order to render all his future Methods of Inſtruction more effectual to their Edification.

THE TWENTIETH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for F. and C. RIVINGTON, Bookſellers to the Society for Promoting Chriſtian Knowledge, at the *Bible and Crown*, No. 62, in *Paul's Church-yard*.

MDCCXCVII.

[Price One Penny, or 7s. per Hundred.]



THE EARNEST EXHORTATION

of a Miniſter to his Pariſhioners to take Care of their Souls.

Moſt dearly Beloved Neighbours,

MY Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God for you is, that you may be ved; and my moſt ſincere Endeavours all ever be, by all Chriſtian Methods can think of, to promote your Salva-on. And becauſe I cannot hope, either *Doctrine*, or *by Reproof*, or *by Inſtruc-n in Righteouſneſs*, to prevail upon oſe to comply with any Methods I can eviſe for the Good of their Souls, who e not thoroughly ſenſible of the Worth them; I think it requiſite, in order make my future Labours more ef-ctual with you, to lay before you ſuch onſiderations as may make you ſenſible the ineſtimable Value of your immor-l Souls.

I take it for granted, that you believe ou have Souls. My Buſineſs is, to a-aken you to a ſerious Concern for their verlaſting Welfare; a Concern the moſt eceſſary of all others; and yet, I fear, ery little laid to Heart; for otherwiſe he Generality of Men could not poſſibly ve as they do: They would not employ

all their Care and Pains in providing
Maintenance for theſe periſhing Bodi
and leave the moſt valuable Part of the
ſelves, their Souls, altogether neglecte
Were we to die as the brute Beaſts, a
that when our dead Bodies are laid in t
Grave, there were an End of us; if th
determined all our Hopes and Fears, a
we return to our Native Duſt, therein
remain for ever; then might we eat a
drink and take our Fill of Pleaſure in th
World, as too many do: But if the So
when it leaves the Body, does immediate
enter into a State of Happineſs or Miſer
if there be a Reſurrection both of t
Juſt and the Unjuſt, as moſt certain
there is; if a future Account muſt
given of every Thing done in the Bod
whether it be Good, or whether it
Evil; and if our eternal State ſhall
appointed us, either in Bliſs or Torme
according as we have behaved ourſelv
in this Life, as undoubtedly it ſhall
methinks it behoves every one of us
look well about us, to inquire ſeriou
what we have been doing all this while
whither the Path we are in leads us, a
what our future State will be.

In order to perſuade you to apply you
Thoughts to thoſe moſt important Conſi
deration

erations, I know no Method which through GOD's Bleſſing) ſeemeth more likely, than to lay before you the ineſtimable Value of your Souls, the infinite Concern you have in their Welfare, how liable they are to be loſt and undone for ever; what excellent Proviſion our moſt gracious GOD hath made for our Security; and how juſt it will be in him to condemn them to the Extremity of Miſery, if you wilfully neglect the Care of them.

Firſt, *Therefore, I intreat you to conſider the great Worth and Value of the Soul.* Remember that it is the immediate Offspring of GOD; that it came from Heaven, from the Father of Spirits: "GOD "breathed into Man the Breath of Life, "and Man became a living Soul." *Gen.* ii. 7. "GOD made Man in his own Image," (not according to the Likeneſs of any of the reſt of the Creatures) "a little lower "than the Angels, and crowned him with "Glory and Immortality." This is our peculiar Privilege, beyond all the Beings of this lower World, that we reſemble our Maker, who is the moſt excellent Being. This is the Prerogative of that ſpiritual and immortal Part of us, our Soul; and conſequently the Soul of Man muſt needs be exceedingly precious and valuable.

Our Bodies are Houſes of Clay, wh
Foundations are in the Duſt: and thou
as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, "they are curiou
"wrought and faſhioned:" yet all
Workmanſhip beſtowed on them is, t
they may be ſerviceable to our Souls,
Tabernacles for that immortal Part
dwell in. The Worth thereof will f
ther appear from that wonderful Eſte
thoſe have of it, who may be ſuppo
to be beſt acquainted with the true Va
of Souls.

Thus GOD the Father takes great D
light in being called and eſteemed
Lover of Souls; and accordingly hath l
out his Thoughts from Everlaſting
the bringing in of them to himſelf. T
Counſels and Contrivances of Heav
have been ſpent on them. The Fath
thought nothing too dear to ſecure a
ſave them; and therefore, when he fo
ſaw we could not continue in that St
of Innocence and Happineſs wherein
were at firſt created, he contrived
make us capable of another Happine
and that at no leſs Expence than t
Blood of his own beloved Son. And c
tainly, GOD would not have thus co
cerned himſelf about Things of little V
lue: no aſſuredly, our Souls are excee

g precious in his Eyes, who hath pre-
red the greateſt Happineſs for them, and
ought nothing too much to ſecure it.

Again, when the Son of God under-
ok to reſcue them from the Slavery of
n and Dominion of the Devil, he
ought it ſufficiently worth his while to
ſcend from Heaven, and put on the
orm of a Servant, and make himſelf of
o Reputation, to live a miſerable Life,
d die a painful and an accurſed Death.
nd ſurely he had not ſo mean an Eſteem
his own heavenly Glory (1 *John* i. 18.)
to part with it for Trifles. And then
rtainly neither can you think your Souls
little Worth, when the Son of God
ought them worth his dying for. He
ould not have thought fit to pay ſo vaſt
Ranſom as his precious Life, for a
hing of ſmall Value: yea, himſelf hath
ſſured us, beyond all Contradiction, that
he Gain of the whole World is not a
ufficient Recompence for the Loſs of
ne Soul.

Again, The Holy Ghoſt is ſtill carry-
ng on that great Work of God's Mercy
n the Salvation of our Souls: For their
Sakes it is that he hath made ſo many
Revelations of God's Will to the World,
and confirmed them by ſo many Mira-

cles: Therefore he ſtill follows us wi
his preventing and aſſiſting Graces: h
inſpires us with good Thoughts, and kin
dles pious Deſires in us; he warms ou
cold Affections, and enflames our Hear
with Devotion; he checks and reſtrain
us from Sin, and upbraids us when w
commit it: he ſtill importuneth, wooeth
and intreateth, that, if poſſible, he ma
awaken us into a Senſe of our Dange
and excite and quicken us to purſue th
Methods of our own Safety and Happineſ
What then are not our Souls worth, abou
which the bleſſed Spirit takes ſo muc
Care, to ſave and make them happy?

The good Angels are miniſtring Spirit
for the good of Souls: They pitch thei
Tents about them, and think it no Diſ
paragement for ſuch glorious Beings a
they are to guard them, and to converſ
with them: They ſtill wait to receive th
Souls of good Men, when they depart ou
of the Body: They rejoice at the Con-
verſion of Souls; a certain Sign that they
have an entire Value for them.

Yea, the Devils themſelves do know,
that, in GOD's Eſteem, nothing is ſo va-
luable under the whole Heaven, as the
Souls of Men: and therefore, as the
greateſt Inſtance of Spite and Malice

they can do to GOD, they make it their utmoſt Endeavour to ſeduce and deſtroy them. They envy the Happineſs Men are capable of, and accordingly labour in their Deſtruction, and triumph when they have accompliſhed it.

Thus you ſee the Soul is of the greateſt Value. How much then does it behove you to take care of it? What Madneſs is it to ſuffer the Body to engroſs all your Care and Thoughts, your Labour and Time; and to permit that precious and immortal Part of you, your Soul, to be overlooked, as a Thing not worth any ſerious Notice or Regard? Eſpecially if you will conſider,

Secondly, *That the Loſs of the Soul is the moſt intolerable of all other Loſſes.* For indeed the Soul may be loſt; not that it ſhall ceaſe to be, (it were well for wicked Men if it could) but it may be undone and miſerable, and in that Senſe loſt to all Eternity; deprived it may be of that Heaven of Happineſs which GOD hath provided for it; of the Enjoyment of Him, "in whoſe Preſence is Fulneſs of "Joy, and at whoſe right Hand there are "Pleaſures for evermore." Nor is this all, the Soul is not only capable of being deprived of infinite Bliſs, but of being

plunged too in the Extremity of Deſpair and Miſery; it is liable to be given over to the Violence and Fury of Devils, and deviliſh Spirits; to be committed to the hateful Society of thoſe miſerable Beings, where Wrath and Envy, Malice and Ill-nature only are to be found; where no Joy, no Peace, no Love, ever enter.

The Miſery of which dreadful State the Holy Spirit hath repreſented by Expreſſions denoting the greateſt Horror and Torment, by "the Lake of Fire and "Brimſtone, everlaſting Flame, a never "dying Worm, unquenchable Fire," &c.

This is the diſmal State the Souls and Bodies of the Wicked will be condemned unto for ever; wherein they muſt ſuffer Day and Night, without Reſt or Intermiſſion. O, dreadful State! with this Addition to the Extremity of Torments, that they will never have an End! Some Comfort it may be to thoſe miſerable Souls had they any Hopes of Deliverance; but it muſt needs exceedingly imbitter every Torment to them, to think of that never-ending Duration of Torment to come; that after they had been in a conſuming Condition for Millions and Millions of Ages in Hell, they have ſtill an eternal Hell behind, and are as far diſtant

tant from the End of their Miſeries, as they were when they firſt began. This muſt needs plunge the wretched Soul into extreme Deſperation.

This State we are liable to be betrayed into; we are in great Danger of it; and how we came to be ſo, is what I intreat you in the next Place to conſider, and to behave yourſelves accordingly.

Thirdly, *Conſider the great Danger your Souls are in by reaſon of Sin.* 'GOD created the firſt Man, *Adam*, without Sin, and endued his Soul with a full Knowledge of his Duty; and with ſuch a Strength that he might, if he would, perform all that was required of him. Having thus created the firſt Man, he made a Covenant or Agreement with him to this Purpoſe; That if he continued in Obedience to GOD, without committing Sin, then, *Firſt*, That Strength of Soul, which he then had, ſhould ſtill be continued to him; and, *Secondly*, That he ſhould never die, but continue in a State of Happineſs for ever: but, on the other Side, if he committed Sin, and diſobeyed GOD, then both he and all his Children after him ſhould loſe that Knowledge, and that perfect Strength which enabled him

'to do all that God required of him
'And *ſecondly*, ſhould be ſubject
'Death; and not only ſo, but to eter
'Damnation in Hell.

'This was the Agreement made wi
'*Adam*, and all Mankind in him, (whic
'we uſually call the firſt Covenant) u
'on which God gave *Adam* a particul
'Commandment, which was no more b
'this; That he ſhould not preſume to e
'of one only Tree of that Garden whe
'in he had placed him, which Go
'called *The Tree of Knowledge of Go*
'*and Evil.* But *Adam*, by the Perſuaſio
'of the Devil, eats of that Tree, di
'obeys God, and ſo brings that fir
'Curſe upon himſelf, and all his Poſte
'rity; and ſo by that one Sin of his, h
'loſt both theſe together; I ſay, the fu
'Knowledge of his Duty, and the Pow
'of performing it. And we being bor
'after his Image loſt them likewiſe, an
'ſo are become both ignorant in diſcer
'ing what we ought to do, and wea
'and unable to the doing of it; havin
'a Backwardneſs to all Good, and a
'Aptneſs and Readineſs to all Evil; lik
'a ſick Stomach, which loathes all whole
'ſome Food, and longs after ſuch Tra
'as may nouriſh the Diſeaſe.'

Thi

This is the Fountain and Original of all our Misery. The Consequence hereof is, that we are now exposed to an infinite Number of Temptations from the World, the Devil, and our own corrupt Nature; that we are ready and inclined to hearken to them and sin against our Maker; and thereby are in continual Danger of being betrayed to that miserable State before described. And this, I hope, may be sufficient at present to assure you, that your Souls are in Danger. And yet, that you may not neglect them as past Hopes, but may be encouraged to set yourselves in good Earnest to take Care of them; consider,

Fourthly, *What an excellent Provision it hath pleased God in his wonderful Mercy to make, in order to rescue and deliver them from these Dangers; and what is required of us in Compliance with this great Mercy.* This GOD hath done by giving up his Son, and in Him making a NEW Covenant with us, after we had broken the FIRST.

'*He has given us his Son*, as the great 'Captain of our Salvation, to redeem and 'rescue us from the Power and Dominion of the Devil or Satan, that great 'Rebel against God; from whom the

'Devil having cauſed us to revolt, he
'carries us captive at his Will, cauſing
'us to fight againſt our Maker, as many
'as he can detain in his Servitude: But
'GOD, I ſay, has *given us this Son*, to reſ-
'cue and recover us out of ſuch a fearful
'State of Sin, Rebellion and Miſery.

'And this he hath done by making in
'Him a new Covenant with us, after
'we had broken the FIRST; that is, by
'propoſing the moſt gracious Terms of
'Reconciliation, through Him our great
'Mediator and Redeemer: and by mak-
'ing Satisfaction, as for our Breach of
'the firſt Covenant, ſo for the Sins of as
'many of us as truly repent of our
'Tranſgreſſions under the Second.

'This *ſecond Covenant* was made with
'*Adam*, and us in him, preſently after
'his Fall, and is briefly contained in
'theſe Words, *Gen.* iii. 15. where GOD
'declares, that "the Seed of the Woman
"ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head;"
'and this ſecond Covenant is made up,
'as the firſt was, of ſome Mercies to
'be afforded by GOD, and ſome Duties
'to be performed by us.

'God herein promiſed to ſend on Earth
'his only Son, who is GOD equal with
'himſelf, to become a Man like unto us

'in

in all Things, Sin only excepted, and he to do for us theſe ſeveral Things:

'1. To make known unto us the whole Will of his Father, in the Performance whereof we ſhall be ſure to be accepted and rewarded by him. And this was one Part of his Buſineſs, which he performed in thoſe many Sermons, Doctrines and Precepts we find ſet down in the Goſpel. And herein he is our Prophet; for it was the Work of a Prophet of old, not only to foretell, but to teach. Our Duty in this Particular is, to hearken diligently to Him, to be moſt ready and deſirous to learn that Will of GOD which he came from Heaven to reveal to us.

'2. The *ſecond* Thing He was to do for us, was to ſatisfy God for our Sins, not only that one of *Adam*, but for all the Sins of Mankind that truly repent and amend; and by this Means to obtain for us Forgiveneſs of Sins, and the Favour of God; and to redeem us from Hell and eternal Damnation, which was the Puniſhment due to our Sins. All this he did for us by his Death: he offered up himſelf a Sacrifice for the Sins of all thoſe who heartily bewail and forſake them. And in this he is

'our

‘ our Prieſt, it being anciently the Prieſt
‘ Office to offer Sacrifice for the Sins
‘ the People. Our Duty in this Particul
‘ is, *Firſt*, Truly and heartily to repe
‘ of our Sins, and to forſake them; with
‘ out which they will never be forgiv
‘ us, though that is the Thing for whic
‘ Chriſt died. *Secondly*, Stedfaſtly to b
‘ lieve, that, if we give ourſelves up
‘ Chriſt, we ſhall have the Benefits of th
‘ Sacrifice of his; that all our Sins, ho
‘ many and great ſoever, ſhall be forgiv
‘ en us, and we ſhall be ſaved from tho
‘ eternal Puniſhments which were d
‘ unto us for them. Another Part of t
‘ Prieſt's Office was, Bleſſing and Pra
‘ ing for the People; and this alſo Chri
‘ performed for us. It was his ſpecial Com
‘ miſſion from his Father to bleſs us,
‘ St. *Peter* tells us, *Acts* iii. 26. "God ſe
" his Son Jeſus to bleſs you;" and th
‘ following Words ſhew wherein th
‘ Bleſſing conſiſts, " in turning aw
‘ every one of you from your Iniquity.
‘ Thoſe Means which he hath uſed f
‘ the turning of us from our Sins, are
‘ be reckoned of all other the greate
‘ Bleſſings; and for the other Part, th
‘ of Praying, that he not only perform
‘ on Earth, but continues ſtill to do

‘ Hea

Heaven; "He ſits on the right Hand of GOD, and makes Requeſt for us," *Rom.* viii. 34. Our Duty herein is, not to reſiſt this unſpeakable Bleſſing of his, but to be willing to be thus bleſſed, in being turned from our Sins; and not to make void and fruitleſs all his Prayers and Interceſſions for us, which will never prevail for us while we continue in our Sins.

3. The *third* Thing that Chriſt was to do for us, was to enable us to give us Strength to do what GOD requires of us. This he doth, *Firſt*, By taking off from the Hardneſs of the Law given to *Adam*, which bound us never to commit the leaſt Sin upon the Pain of Damnation: So that now GOD requires of us only an honeſt and hearty Endeavour to do what we are able; and where we fail of that through Weakneſs, he accepts of our ſincere Repentance. *Secondly*, By ſending his Holy Spirit into our Hearts, to govern and rule us, to give us Strength to overcome Temptations to Sin, and to do all that he now under the Goſpel requires of us. And in this Chriſt is our King, it being the Office of a King to govern and rule, and to ſubdue our Enemies. Our Duty

'in this Particular is, to give up ourſelv
'to be obedient Subjects of his; to b
'governed and ruled by him; to obe
'all his Laws; not to take Part wit
'any Rebel; that is, not to cheriſh an
'one Sin, but diligently to pray for hi
'Grace to enable us to ſubdue the
'all; and then carefully to make uſe o
'it to that Purpoſe.

'*Laſtly*, He has purchaſed for all th
'faithfully obey him, an eternal, glorio
'Inheritance, the Kingdom of Heave
'whither he is gone before to take Po
'ſeſſion for us. Our Duty herein i
'firſt, to be exceeding careful that w
'forfeit not our Parts in it, which w
'ſhall certainly do if we continue im
'penitent in any Sin. Secondly, not t
'faſten our Affections on this World, bu
'raiſe them up to Heaven and heaven
'Things, according to the Precept of th
'Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 2. "Set your Affec
"tions on Things above, and not o
"Things on the Earth;" continually long
'ing to come to the Poſſeſſion of th
'Bleſſed Inheritance of ours; in com
'pariſon whereof, all Things here belo
'ſhould ſeem vile and mean to us.

'This is the Sum of that SECOND Co
'venant we are now under; wherein yo
'ſee what Chriſt hath done, how he exe
'cute

cutes thoſe three great Offices of King, Prieſt and Prophet; as alſo what is required of us, without our faithful Performance of which, all that he hath done ſhall never ſtand us in any Stead; for he will never be a Prieſt to ſave any, who take him not only for their Prophet to teach, and their King to rule them; nay, if we neglect our Part of this Covenant, our Condition will be yet worſe than if it had never been made; for we ſhall be to anſwer, not for the Breach of Law only, as in the firſt Covenant, but for the Abuſe of Mercy, which is of all Sins the moſt provoking. On the other Side, if we faithfully perform it; that is, ſet ourſelves heartily to the obeying of every Precept of Chriſt, not going on wilfully in any one Sin, but bewailing and forſaking whatever we have formerly been guilty of, it is then moſt certain that all the afore-mentioned Benefits of Chriſt belong to us.

'And now you ſee how little Reaſon you have to caſt off the Care of your Souls, upon a Conceit that they are paſt Cure; for it is plain that they are not; nay certainly, that they are in that very Condition, which of all others makes

'makes them fitteſt for our Care. If the
'had not been thus redeemed by Chriſt
'they had been then ſo helpleſs tha
'Care would have been in vain: O
'the other Side, if this Redemption ha
'been ſuch, that all Men ſhould be ſave
'by it, though they live as they liſt, w
'ſhould have thought it needleſs to tak
'Care for them; becauſe they were ſaf
'without it. But it hath pleaſed Go
'ſo to order it, that our Care muſt be th
'Means, by which they muſt receive th
'Good, even of all that Chriſt hath don
'for them.'

And now, if you will but lay thes Things to Heart, your Reaſon, and you Intereſt will both direct you how to be have yourſelves. Methinks I hear ſom of you, as Men deeply affected with th Senſe of theſe Things, with a ſerious an compaſſionate Regard to their Souls crying out with St. *Peter's* Hearers "Men, and Brethren what muſt we d "to be ſaved!" I would to GOD tha every Man would make this Applicatio to himſelf; and if they do not, it is to certain a Sign, that either they believ that they have no immortal Souls, o that it is impoſſible they ſhould for eve miſcarry.

Give

Give me leave à little to reaſon the Caſe with you, my dear Neighbours, to perſuade you to take Care of your Souls. Are they made after the Image and Similitude of God; why then will you ſuffer them to be transformed to the Image of Satan? Has God provided a Heaven of Happineſs for them? Why will you be ſo cruel and unjuſt to them, as to expoſe them to the intolerable Flames of Hell? Since God the Father hath rated them at the higheſt Value, and expreſſed his chief Concern for them; why will ye neglect and undervalue them as Things of no Price? Since God the Son thought not his own Blood too great a Price for them; why do you chooſe to ſell them for the trifling Vanities of this World? Since the Holy Ghoſt is continually at work to preſerve them; whence comes it to paſs that ye hardly think them worth the ſlendereſt Part of your Care? Since the bleſſed Angels are employed in miniſtering unto them; why do you defeat all their Endeavours for your Good? Since they rejoice at the Converſion of Souls; why will ye refuſe to afford them this Matter of rejoicing, where the greateſt Advantage will be your own? Wherefore do you ſeek to gratify

gratify our common Adverſary the Devil ſo far as to permit him to diſappoint the gracious Purpoſes of GOD towards us? O that Men can be ſo ſenſeleſs, as to ſee their Souls periſhing before their Eyes without Remorſe or Compaſſion! That they can paſs Day after Day, without making any Offer or Attempt to recover them!

Conſider you have not only the Sin of your firſt Parents to be forgiven you, but alſo innumerable actual Sins of your own; and thoſe perhaps committed againſt the Light of your own Conſciences, againſt the expreſs Command of GOD, againſt the Dictates of the Holy Spirit, againſt frequent Warnings and Admonitions from others, and contrary to many repeated Vows and Reſolutions. Theſe are Aggravations ſufficient to ſink a Soul into the bottomleſs Pit, and yet ſtill there is Hope, there is a Remedy even for ſuch Sinners, if they repent and return from their Sin, and become ſincerely obedient to the Laws of GOD, and accept the Lord Jeſus as their King, their Prieſt and their Prophet, GOD will for his Sake accept them. "Remember that ye were "not redeemed with corruptible Things, "as Silver and Gold, but with the pre-

"cious

cious Blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without Blemiſh and without Spot," *Pet.* i. 18, 19. This was the Ranſom ſ Souls which GOD required, and if you ject this, He will accept no other; nd you do reject it, (and GOD ſo in-rprets it) if you do not accept him upon is own Terms; if you do not give up ourſelves unto Chriſt, to be guided and overned, as well as ſaved by him; other-iſe you renounce all your Part and In-reſt in his Blood, and do it as it were eclare you will not be beholden to him; nd then ſurely you cannot complain that GOD is unmerciful, if he takes the For-iture, and condemns thoſe who would ot be ſaved by him. The Promiſes and hreatnings of the Goſpel, and all the ther Methods which GOD hath uſed to eform and reclaim Sinners, are all In-tances of his great Goodneſs to us, of his eal and Concern for our Happineſs; and we ſtill continue to reject and ſet them t nought, how juſt, as well as ſevere, will e our Condemnation? Has he taken all maginable Care to oblige you to be kind o yourſelves, and faithful to your trueſt ntereſt, and will you ſtill forſake your wn Mercies? If you thus wilfully ſeek our own Ruin, how righteous will it be n GOD to deliver you up to everlaſting Miſery?

Let me therefore beſeech you, even b
all that is Sacred and Serious, by eve
Thing that is dear and precious to yo
by your beſt Hopes, and the moſt im
portant Concern of your everlaſting B
ing, to take Pity upon your poor Soul
to conſider the Dangers whereto they a
expoſed, and to conſult and comply wi
the Means of their Preſervation.

Learn, I pray you, to affect your Hear
with a ſerious Senſe of your Dangers,
repent earneſtly of your paſt Sins, ſincere
reſolve to be more Holy, Watchful, a
Circumſpect for the Time to come
pray earneſtly for the Graces of God
Holy Spirit; cheriſh in your Souls
lively Faith in the Mercies of Go
through Chriſt, and in all Reſpects,
God ſhall enable you, and you ſhall b
hereafter from Time to Time inſtructe
let your Prayers and your Endeavou
be, that you may be wiſe unto Salvatio
And that you may abound in all ſpiritu
Wiſdom and Underſtanding, and ma
be accepted as faithful Servants of Go
and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the gre
Day of Accounts; as it is the earne
Prayer, ſo it ſhall be the conſtant Ende
vour of

Your affectionate Servant in Chriſt Jeſ

FINIS

10.

A LETTER FROM THE LORD BISHOP OF *LONDON*, TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF LONDON and WESTMINSTER, ON OCCASION OF THE LATE EARTHQUAKES.

A NEW EDITION.

London:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
No. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
By Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1800.

LETTER

TO THE

CLERGY AND INHABITANTS

OF THE

Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

My Brethren and Friends,

THE Relation I ſtand in to you, is a daily Call upon me to conſider the ſpiritual State of theſe great Cities; and though I doubt not but GOD has many faithful and choſen Servants among you, yet the general View of the Wickedneſs and Corruption that abound, and are ſpreading far and wide, gives me, and muſt give to every ſerious Chriſtian, very painful Reflexions: It is hardly poſſible to think of the Hiſtory of Providence, recorded in Holy Writ, and the many Examples of Di-

vine Juſtice exerciſed, ſometimes in puniſhing, ſometimes in utterly deſtroying wicked Nations or Cities, without being ſenſibly affected with Apprehenſions for ourſelves: But more eſpecially have we Reaſon to fear, when we ſee the *Beginning of Sorrows*, and the Diſpleaſure of the Almighty manifeſted in the Calamities we ſuffer under, and in the Signs and Tokens given us to expect a far more dreadful Judgment.

It is every Man's Duty, and it is mine to call upon you, to give Attention to all the Warnings which God in his Mercy affords to a ſinful People: Such Warning we have had, by Two great Shocks of an Earthquake; a Warning, which ſeems to have been immediately and eſpecially directed to theſe great Cities, and the Neighbourhood of them; where the Violence of the Earthquake was ſo ſenſible, though in diſtant Parts hardly felt, that it will be Blindneſs wilful and inexcuſable not to apply to ourſelves this ſtrong Summons from God to Repentance.

Thought-

THOUGHTLESS or hardened Sinners may be deaf to theſe Calls; and Little Philoſophers, who ſee a little, and but very little into natural Cauſes, may think they ſee enough to account for what happens, without calling in the Aid and Aſſiſtance of a ſpecial Providence; not conſidering, that GOD, who made all Things, never put any Thing out of his own Power, but has all Nature under Command, to ſerve his Purpoſes in the Government of the World. But be their Imaginations to themſelves: the Subject is too ſerious for trifling; and calls us off to other Views.

IF we conſider the general Government of the World by GOD, and upon what Reaſons and Motives he acts, when he brings Calamities and Plagues upon any People: Or if we recollect from Hiſtory ſacred and profane, what State and Condition, with reſpect to Religion and Morality, the People were in, who have been Examples of Juſtice: And then compare our own Caſe with the general Reaſon by which Providence acts, and with the Circumſtances of thoſe by whoſe Example we ought to

take Warning, we ſhall ſoon diſcover whether there be juſt Reaſon for our Apprehenſions. If thoſe who have been deſtroyed by Fire from Heaven, or ſwallowed up by the Earth, were *Sinners*, and we are *righteous*, let us fear nothing, nor be diſmayed, though the *Foundations* of the Earth be removed: But if our Conſciences tell us that we have ſinned after their Example, what Conſolation is there to be had againſt the juſt Expectation of ſuffering after their Example alſo?

The ſame Concluſion will ariſe from a Contemplation of God's general Providence; which though it is not daily exerted in puniſhing all Men, or all Vices that deſerve it; yet is always armed with Power to ſtop outrageous Wickedneſs; and he has told us in his holy Word, what we may expect from his Juſtice, when we are grown hardened and obdurate againſt his Mercy.

Upon theſe Principles let your own Caſe be examined: But who ſhall be your Accuſer? Shall I? God forbid: *My Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God for*

you is, that you may be ſaved. ear me then with Patience, not as ur Accuſer, but as your faithful Ser- nt and Monitor in Chriſt Jeſus, arning you to flee from the Wrath at is to come.

HAD this Part of the World had leſs nowledge and leſs Light, they might ve ſome Excuſe, and ſome Hope that od would wink at the Times of their gnorance: But they have had the Light, nd have loved Darkneſs: The Goſpel f Chriſt, in which all the Goodneſs nd Mercy of GOD are diſplayed, thro' he Redemption purchaſed by the Blood f Chriſt; in which the Aid and Com- ort of the Holy Spirit of GOD is of- ered to all who diligently ſeek it; in hich the Hopes and Fears of Eternity re diſplayed, to guard us againſt the emptations of Sin; has been not only ejected, but treated with a malicious corn; and all our Hopes in Chriſt re- reſented as Deluſions and Impoſitions pon the Weakneſs of Men. How has he Preſs for many Years paſt ſwarmed with Books, ſome to diſpute, ſome to idicule the great Truths of Religion, both natural and revealed. I ſhall men-

tion no particular Caſes, there is no nee for it; the Thing is notorious. I wi the Guilt in this Inſtance was confin to the Authors only, and that no bod elſe was anſwerable for it: But the Ea neſtneſs with which theſe Books we ſought after, the Pleaſure and Appro bation with which they were received are too ſtrong Indications of the gener Taſte, to be diſſembled; and the Indu try uſed to diſperſe theſe Books at hom and abroad, and eſpecially to our Plan tations in *America*, to which gre Numbers, and at a great Expence, hav been conveyed; are Proofs of ſuch Ma lice againſt the Goſpel, and the Holy Author of it, as would not be born even in a *Mahometan* Country. In thi Branch of Trade, this great City beat all the World; it is become even the Mart for Infidelity.

It required no great Sagacity to foreſee what the Conſequence would be of the Pains taken to unſettle all Principles of Religion. Infidelity and Immorality are too nearly allied to be long ſeparated; and though ſome have pretended to preſerve a Senſe of Virtue without the Aid of Religion, yet Experience

perience has ſhewed, that People who have neither Hopes nor Fears with Reſpect to *another* World, will ſoon abuſe *this* by indulging the worſt of their Paſſions; and will not regard Man, when once they have learned to diſregard GOD.

WHETHER this be our Caſe, let every Man judge by what he hears and ſees; by what, indeed, he *muſt* hear and ſee, if he lives amongſt us. Blaſphemy and horrid Imprecations domineer in our Streets, and poor Wretches are every Hour wantonly and wickedly calling for Damnation on themſelves and others; which may be (it is much to be feared) too near them already. Add to this the Lewdneſs and Debauchery that prevail amongſt the loweſt People, which keeps them idle, poor and miſerable, and renders them incapable of getting an honeſt Livelihood for themſelves and Families; the Number of lewd Houſes, which trade in their Vices, and which muſt at any rate be paid for making Sin convenient to them; and it will account for Villanies of another Kind, which are growing ſo faſt as to be inſupportable, and almoſt incurable:

For, where is the Wonder that Perſons ſo abandoned ſhould be ready to commit all Sorts of Outrage and Violence?—A City without Religion can never be a ſafe Place to dwell in.

THE unnatural Lewdneſs, of which we have heard ſo much of late, is ſomething more than brutiſh, and can hardly be mentioned without offending chaſte Ears; and yet cannot be paſſed over entirely in Silence, becauſe of the particular Mark of Divine Vengeance ſet upon it in the Deſtruction of *Sodom* by Fire from Heaven. Dreadful Example!

BUT theſe Vices are ſo enormous, that it is to be hoped the Generality of our People are not guilty; I hope in GOD they are not; I truſt they are not. But how unhappy is it for this Country, that there ſhould be any Ground even for Suſpicion that theſe Vices are growing to be common!

BUT to go one Step further—

WHEN Men, not content with indulging their own brutiſh Paſſions, take

Pains

ins to corrupt others, they act with
ch cool and diabolical Malice, as out-
es former Examples, and ſeems to be
Challenge to the Power and Juſtice of
od.—Have not all the Abominations
the Public Stews been opened to View
lewd Pictures expoſed to Sale at
oon-day? Have not Hiſtories or Ro-
ances of the vileſt Proſtitutes been
ubliſhed, intended merely to diſplay
he moſt execrable Scenes of Lewdneſs;
ewdneſs repreſented without Diſguiſe,
nd nothing omitted that might in-
ame the corrupt Paſſions of the Youth
f the Nation! What was the Encou-
agement for Men to dare giving
uch an Affront, not only to the
ommon Senſe, but to the common
aw of the Country? Was it not
be quick Sale theſe Pictures and
theſe Books had? And is not this
deplorable Circumſtance, and ſad In-
ſtance, of the corrupt Diſpoſition of
many among us?

Is it to be wondered at, after ſo much
Pains taken to corrupt the Religion and
Morals of the People, that they ſhould
be indiſpoſed to attend to any thing ſe-
rious, or that they grow ſick of Reli-

gion, which has no Comforts for them that they fly from the Church, and croud to the Playhouſe: That they are tired of themſelves, and their own Thoughts, and want to loſe themſelves in Company from Morning to Night? It is this unhappy, unſettled State of Mind, that has introduced a Kind of general Idleneſs among the People, and given Riſe to almoſt infinite Places of Diverſion in and about this Town; it were well if they were Places of Diverſion only; but they are often Places for carrying on worſe Buſineſs, and give Opportunities to the Profligate to ſeduce the Innocent, who often meet their Ruin, where they only came for Pleaſure—While I was writing this, I caſt my Eye upon a News-Paper of the Day, and counted no leſs than fifteen Advertiſements for *Plays*, *Operas*, *Muſic*, and *Dancing*, for Meetings at *Gardens*, for *Cock-fighting*, *Prize-fighting*, &c. Should this Paper, (as many of our News-Papers do) go abroad, what an Idea muſt it give to all the Churches abroad, of the Manner in which *Lent* is kept in this Proteſtant Country? What our Saviour ſaid to the Jews upon another Occaſion, *You have turned the*

Houſe

Houſe of Prayer into a Den of Thieves, may, with a little Variation, be applied to ourſelves; We have turned this Seaſon, appointed for ſerious Reflexions, and Humiliation of Body and Spirit, into a Time of Mirth and Jollity, of Muſick, Dancing, and riotous Living.

How far this Spirit of Indolence and Idleneſs has gone, and to what Exceſs, may be ſeen in all Orders among us; friendly Viſits for Converſation are become inſipid Things, and are degenerated into Meetings for Gaming, where People hardly known to each other, are invited by one Tie only, the Love of Play: Which ſeems now to be not an Amuſement or Diverſion, but a ſerious Buſineſs of Life, and one would think a *neceſſary* one, by ſeeing how ſome Children are trained up to it.

THERE is a great and grievous Evil among us, which naturally ſprings from the Diſorders beforementioned: I mean, the great Increaſe of Popery in this Kingdom. When Men have loſt all Principles of Religion, and are loſt to all Senſe of Morality, they are prepared to

to receive any Superſtition, whenever the Decay of Health, or the croſs Accidents of Life revive the Fears of Futurity; which may be ſtifled, but cannot be extinguiſhed: ſuch Perſons, not able to digeſt the wholeſome Food of Repentance, by which their ſpiritual Condition might be gradually mended, greedily ſwallow the high Cordial of Abſolution, which, like other Cordials, gives ſome preſent Eaſe, but works no Cure. And with reſpect to People of a ſerious and religious Turn of Mind, the manifeſt and almoſt general Contempt, or at leaſt Neglect, of the Duties of Religion, gives a great Advantage to the Emiſſaries of *Rome* to impoſe on their Weakneſs, and to perſuade them that they can have no Hopes in the Religion of a Church, where Religion itſelf is hardly to be found.

LAY theſe Things together; and what more your own Obſervation and Reflexion may furniſh, and much more they may furniſh; and then aſk your Heart, whether you have not Reaſon to fear, that GOD will viſit for theſe Things. If your Heart miſgives you, and

and forebodes the Time of taking Vengeance for theſe Iniquities to be drawing near, conſider further, how graciouſly you have been dealt with by having had Warning of your Danger; and remember, that the *Long-ſufferance of God is a Call to Repentance.*

It is purely for the Sake of this Reflexion, that I now addreſs myſelf to you: I have no Pleaſure in laying open the Shame of my Country, or in expoſing its Nakedneſs, either to Friends or to Foes; and when I conſider my own Situation, it is a Proſpect void of all Comfort to me, to ſee the Condition of the People over whom I have a Charge; and, God knows my Heart, theſe Conſiderations are a Pain and Grief to my Mind.

But, let us not deſpair; there is ſtill one Remedy left, and whatever Reaſon we have to condemn ourſelves, yet of this we may be ſure, that God has not *forgotten to be gracious.* To Him then let us turn, with hearty Repentance for our Sins, and with a Reſolution to do, each of us in his proper Station, what lies in our Power to ſtem

the

the Torrent of Iniquity which threatens our Ruin.

As to You, my Brethren of the Clergy, who share with me the Care of the Souls in these populous Cities, let me exhort You, (though I trust you want not to be exhorted) to awaken the People, to call them from the Lethargy in which they have too long lived, and make them see their own Danger.——Speak to them, *persuade them, as knowing the Terrors of the Lord.*——Speak to their Hearts and Consciences, with such Plainness as becomes the Ministers of the Gospel; tell them *in Season and out of Season*, that *unless they repent, they must perish.* If the Warnings we have had are a Call on the People to Repentance, remember they are still stronger Calls on us, to *preach* Repentance, and to discharge the Duty we owe to God and his Church, and to the Flock of Christ, over whom we are placed. May this Work of God prosper in our Hands!

I should be wanting to the Duty I owe to the Highest as well as the Lowest, should I omit on this Occasion to remind

remind thoſe who are entruſted by their Country, with the Government of theſe populous Cities, how much the Welfare of the People depends upon the faithful Execution of the Law. I pretend not to accuſe *them particularly* of Neglect, a *general Neglect* of this Kind is one of the worſt Symptoms of the Time; every Man is left to do what is right in his own Eyes; one would think *there was no King in Iſrael.* Could the vile abominable Pictures of Lewdneſs have been offered to Sale in the moſt frequented Parts of the City; could Books for the Inſtruction of the Unexperienced in all the Myſteries of Iniquity have been publickly cried in our Streets; had not the Laws, and the Guardians of the Laws, been aſleep?— But ſurely it is high Time to awake; and to let People once more know, (what ſeems to be almoſt forgotten) that Laws are made for the *Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice, and for the Maintenance of true Religion.*

GOVERNMENT is a great Truſt, and the Powers of it are not intended merely to do Honour to thoſe who have them, but muſt be uſed for the Good of

of the Community. This is a Truth sufficiently known; it has been sounded in the Ears of the Nation, without ceasing; but the Misfortune is, that this Doctrine has been applied so constantly to the *Supreme* Magistrate only, that those who have *subordinate* Powers derived from his Authority, forget, or are not accustomed, to make the Application to themselves. And yet surely, there is not a Constable, but has, in Proportion to the Power the Law gives him, a Trust reposed in him in Behalf of his King and his Country: Those who are in higher Offices have still greater Reason, as more depends upon the due Exercise of their Authority, to be watchful for the Community. The Good of Society must be influenced by their Conduct and Example, one Way or other. Great Officers of Justice cannot be *useless*, without being *pernicious*.

If a Regard for the Public is not a Motive strong enough in this Case, let every Magistrate consider, that there is another of infinite Importance to himself; for if all Power be the *Ordinance* of God, He will undoubtedly demand an

n Account of the Exercise of it? And ho is he that has so little to answer or on his own Account, as willingly to ubject himself to be answerable for the ins of others which either by his Enouragement, or his Connivance, he nakes his own? Pardon the Freedom f this Address: I honour and reerence *your* Office, and I hope I give ou no Occasion to despise *mine*.

Next to those in public Offices of Power and Trust, the Happiness of the Public depends upon those who have he Government in private Families. Here it is that the Youth of the Nation must be formed, and if they are uffered to be corrupted in their Religion or Morals before they come into he *World*, there is little Hope that the *World* will reform them. All wise Men, Legislators, and Princes, have acknowledged not only the Use, but the Necessity of an early Education to form the Mind, whilst tender, to the Principles of Honour and Virtue; and what is more, the wisest of all, the Writers inspired by the Holy Spirit, have required it as a Duty from Parents, and as Part of the Obedience they owe to God:

Even

Even our Unbelievers have seen how far Religion depended on this Care, and under a Pretence of maintaining the Liberty of the human Mind, and guarding it against early Prejudices, they have endeavoured to persuade the World, that Children should be taught nothing of Religion, but be left to form Notions for themselves. They have had but too great Success, and we begin to see the Fruits of it. The Children of this Age grow soon to be Men and Women, and are admitted to be Partners and Witnesses to the Follies and Vices of their Parents. Thus trained and educated, when they come to be Masters and Mistresses of Families, they answer fully what was to be expected from them; they are often a Torment to each other, and to themselves, and have Reason to bemoan themselves, for the Indulgence shewn them in their early Days.

Would you see the Effects of this Education in all Orders among us, look into the many Public Assemblies; sometimes you may see Old Age affecting the Follies of Youth, and counterfeiting the Airs of Gaiety; sometimes Men

lying

ying in wait to ſeduce Women, and Women to ſeduce Men; and even Children ſeriouſly employed at the Gaming-Table, as if their Parents were concerned to form them early to the Taſte of the Age, and were afraid that they ſhould not ſoon enough, of themſelves, find the Way to their Ruin.

Look near Home; See the Temptations of this Sort which ſurround theſe Cities, and are indeed ſo many Snares to catch your Sons and Daughters, and Apprentices. Can you look on, and be unconcerned? For God's Sake, and for the Sake of your Children and your Country, take the Courage to act like Parents and Maſters of Families: Reformation muſt begin in private Families; the Law and the Magiſtrate can puniſh your Children when they become wicked; but it is you who muſt make them good, by proper Inſtruction, and proper Government. If you ſuffer them to meet Temptation, where Temptation is ſure to meet them, never complain of him who corrupts your Child, you are the Corrupter yourſelf; to you he owes it, that he is undone. And perhaps, there is not a more provoking

Cir-

Circumſtance, nor a greater Call fo
Divine Vengeance on a wicked Natio
than this, that the Youth are prepar
and brought up to inherit all the Vic
of their Fathers: which cuts off a
Proſpect of Reformation; and ſtan
as a Bar between us and Mercy.

On you therefore, Fathers and Mo
thers, your Country and the Churc
of God call for Aſſiſtance; your En
deavours may go a great Way toward
ſaving us, and this wicked Generatio
may be ſpared, for the Hope of ſeein
the next better.

In a Word; Let every Man, what
ever his Station is, do his Part toward
averting the Judgments of God: Le
every Man reform himſelf, and others
as far as his Influence goes: This is ou
only proper Remedy; for the diſſolut
Wickedneſs of the Age is a more dread
ful Sign and Prognoſtication of Divine
Anger, than even the Trembling o
the Earth under us.

To our own Endeavours, let us add
continual and fervent Supplications to
the Almighty, that He would *ſpare us,*

and not deal with us according to the multitude of our Sins; that He would give us the Grace of Repentance, and open our Eyes to ſee, before it is too late, *the Things which belong to our Salvation.*

MAY the GOD of all Mercy hear you in this Day of your Diſtreſs! To his Protection, and the Grace of our Lord *Jeſus*, I earneſtly recommend you. I am,

Your Affectionate Brother, and

Servant in Chriſt Jeſus,

THO. LONDON.

F I N I S.

Printed by BYE and LAW, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.



11.

Dr. TILLOTSON'S

LETTER

TO

Mr. NICHOLAS HUNT,

OF CANTERBURY;

WHO HAD A CANCER, OF WHICH HE DIED, 1687.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD;
By Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1799.



Dr. TILLOTSON'S

LETTER

TO

Mr. NICHOLAS HUNT,

OF CANTERBURY;

WHO HAD A CANCER, OF WHICH HE DIED, 1687.

SIR,

I AM ſorry to underſtand by Mr. *Janeway*'s Letter to my Son that your Diſtemper grows upon you; and that you ſeem to decline ſo faſt: I am very ſenſible how much eaſier it is to give Advice againſt Trouble in the Caſe of another, than to take it in our own.

It hath pleaſed GOD to exerciſe me of late with a very ſore Trial, in the Loſs of my dear and only Child, in which I do perfectly ſubmit to his good Pleaſure; firmly believing that He always does that which is beſt: And yet, though Reaſon be ſatisfied, our Paſſion is not ſo ſoon appeaſed: And when Nature hath received a Wound, Time muſt be allowed for the Healing of it. Since that, GOD hath thought fit to give me a nearer Summons of a cloſer Warning of my own Mortality, in the Danger of an *Apoplexy*; which yet, I thank GOD for it, hath occaſioned no very melancholy Reflections. But this, perhaps, is more owing to natural Temper, than Philoſophy and wiſe Conſiderations.

YOUR

YOUR Caſe, I know, is very different, who are of a Temper naturally melancholy, and under a Diſtemper apt to increaſe it; for both which great Allowances ought to be made: and yet, methinks, both Reaſon and Religion do offer us Conſiderations of that Solidity and Strength, as may very well ſupport our Spirits under all the Frailties and Infirmities of the Fleſh; ſuch as theſe:

THAT God is perfect Love and Goodneſs; that we are not only his Creatures, but his Children, and are as dear to Him as to ourſelves: That He *does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: And that all Evils or Afflictions that befal us, are intended for the Cure and Prevention of the greater Evils of Sin and Pu-

niſhment: And therefore we ought not only to ſubmit to them with Patience, as being deſerved by us, but to receive them with Thankfulneſs, as being deſigned by Him to do us that Good, and to bring us to that Senſe of Him and ourſelves, which perhaps nothing elſe would have done. That the Sufferings of this preſent Life are but ſhort and light, compared with thoſe extreme and endleſs Miſeries which we have deſerved; and with that exceeding Weight of Glory which we hope for in the other World, if we be careful to make the beſt Preparations for Death and Eternity. Whatever brings us nearer our End, brings us nearer to our Happineſs; and how rugged ſoever the Way may be, the Comfort is, that it leads us to our Father's Houſe, where we ſhall want

nothing

nothing that we can wish for. Now we labour under a dangerous Distemper that threatens our Life; what would we not be contented to bear, in order to a perfect Recovery, could we but be assured of it? And should we not be willing to endure much more in order to Happiness, and that eternal Life, which GOD that cannot lie hath promised?

NATURE, I know, is fond of Life, and apt to be still lingering after a longer Continuance here; and yet a long Life, with the usual Burdens and Infirmities of it, is seldom desirable: It is but the same Things over again, or worse; so many more Nights and Days, Summers and Winters; a Repetition of the same Pleasures, but with less Pleasure and Relish; every Day a Return of the same,

ſame, and greater Pains and Trouble, but with leſs Strength and Patience to bear them. Theſe, and the like Conſiderations, I uſe to entertain myſelf withal, not only with Contentment but Comfort; though with great Inequality of Temper at ſeveral Times, and with much Mixture of human Frailties, which will always ſtick to us whilſt we are in this World: However, by theſe kind of Thoughts Death ſeems more familiar to us, and we ſhall be able by Degrees to bring our Minds cloſe up to it, without ſtarting at it.

THE greateſt Tenderneſs I find in myſelf, is with regard to ſome Relations; eſpecially the dear and conſtant Companion of my Life; which I muſt confeſs, doth very ſenſibly touch me: But then I conſider, and ſo

ſo I hope will they alſo, that this Separation will be but a very little while; and that though I ſhall leave them in a bad World, yet under the Care of a good GOD, who can be more and better to them than all other Relations, and will certainly be ſo to thoſe that love Him, and hope in his Mercy.

I SHALL not need to adviſe You what to do, and what Uſe to make of this Time of your Viſitation.—— I have Reaſon to believe, that you have been careful in the Time of your Health to prepare for the evil Day; and have been converſant in thoſe Books, which give the beſt Directions to this Purpoſe; and have not, as too many do, put off the great Work of your Life to the End of it. And then you have nothing to do, but,

as

as well as you can under your preſent Weakneſs and Pains, to renew your Repentance for all the Errors and Miſcarriages of your Life; and earneſtly to beg GOD's Pardon and Forgiveneſs of them, for his Sake who is the Propitiation of our Sins. In comforting yourſelf in the Goodneſs and the Promiſes of God, and the Hopes of that Happineſs you are ready to enter into; and in the mean Time, to exerciſe Faith and Patience, for a little while; and be of good Courage, ſince you ſee Land: The Storm which you are in will ſoon be over, and then it will be as if it had never been; or rather, the Remembrance of it will be a Pleaſure.

I DO not uſe to write ſuch long Letters; but I do heartily compaſſionate your Caſe, and ſhould be glad

if I could ſuggeſt any Thing that might help to mitigate your Trouble, and make the ſharp and rugged Way through which you are to paſs into a better World, a little more ſmooth and eaſy.

I PRAY GOD to fit us Both for that great Change, which we muſt once undergo; and if we be but in any good Meaſure fit, ſooner or later makes no great Difference.

I COMMEND YOU to the *Father of Mercies and the God of all Conſolation*; beſeeching Him to increaſe your Faith and Patience; and to ſtand by You in your laſt and great Conflict: that when You *walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, you may *fear no Evil:* and when your Heart fails, and your Strength fails,

you

you may find Him *the Strength of your Heart, and your Portion for ever.*

FAREWELL, my good Friend; and whilst we are here, let us pray for one another, that we may have a joyful Meeting in another World. So I rest,

Your truly affectionate



Friend and Servant,

JOHN TILLOTSON.

Printed by Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

THE WAY OF LIVING IN A METHOD, AND BY RULE;

OR, A

REGULAR WAY OF EMPLOYING OUR TIME:

RECOMMENDED

In a ſhort, plain, practical Diſcourſe to the CHARITY-SCHOOLS, for the Uſe of the Youth brought up in them.

BY A PRESBYTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
By Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1800.

[Price 1d. or 25 for 1s. 6d.]

ECCLES. III. 1.

TO EVERY THING THERE IS A SEASON, AND A TIME TO EVERY PURPOSE UNDER THE HEAVEN.

TIME is one of thoſe Talents which our great Maſter has intruſted us with, to improve to his Glory, and our own Happineſs. And we ſhould all of us be very careful how we employ our Time; becauſe we muſt one Day moſt certainly give an Account of it. But how little is this conſidered in the World? For do not moſt Perſons live as if their Time was their own, and they might do what they would with it? But let none of us deceive ourſelves; for we were not made to live as we liſt, but to ſerve God, and have received Rules from him to direct us how to ſerve him. And we ſhould ſo order our Lives, as to be always either actually employed in ſerving God, or in fitting ourſelves for his Service. This may ſeem a hard

Saying, and ſcarce poſſible to be obſerved by us. But would we caſt our Lives into a Method, and bring ourſelves to live by Rule, we ſhould find no ſuch great Difficulty in it; For it would only be a dividing our Time between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreſhments of our Natures; and an Allotting to theſe Offices, Works and Refreſhments, their proper Seaſons; and an obſerving at all Times, ſo far as we can, theſe Seaſons. This ſeems to be recommended in my Text; for it tells us, that there is *to every Thing a* proper *Seaſon, and a Time to every Purpoſe under the Heaven.* In ſpeaking to theſe Words, I ſhall do theſe following Things:

I. I ſhall conſider the Nature of thoſe Things which ſhould employ our Time.

II. I ſhall ſhew what Kind of Method is proper to be obſerved by us in the dividing our Time between thoſe Things.

III. I ſhall give ſome Rules to be obſerved by us in the Performance of theſe Things at their proper Seaſons.

IV. And laſtly, I ſhall offer ſome Arguments to perſuade you to endeavour to live, ſo far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule.

I. I ſhall conſider the Nature of thoſe Things which ſhould employ our Time. Theſe Things are the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreſhments of our Natures.

1. The firſt Thing which ſhould employ our Time, are the holy Offices of Religion; ſuch as private and publick Prayer; Reading the Holy Scriptures, and other good Books; Hearing the Word of God read and explained by Catechiſing and Preaching; Meditating by ourſelves on what we read or hear; diſcourſing of it with others; Self-Examination, and receiving the bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And theſe religious Offices are of the greateſt Conſequence and Importance to us, becauſe they do more immediately concern God, our Souls, and another World; for they are the moſt ſolemn Expreſſions of our Subjection to God, and Dependence upon him, the bleſſed Inſtruments of maintaining the greateſt Communication between God and our Souls that we are capable

of in this Life, and the happy Means of preparing us for the Enjoyment of a more intimate and perfect Union with him, in that State which is to come. They are, as our bleſſed Lord tells us, *Luke* x. 42. *The one Thing needful, that better Part which can never be taken from us*; for they tend to improve us in all thoſe Graces and Virtues in this World, which we ſhall carry along with us into the other. And this obligeth us to ſpend ſo much of our Time in theſe holy Offices, as we can ſpare from the proper Works of our Callings, and the neceſſary Refreſhments of our Natures; to ſpend ſome Part of every Day, a greater Part of the Feſtival and Faſt-Days, and the greateſt Part of the Lord's Day, in them. This is the beſt and moſt uſeful Way of employing our Time; for this will improve our ſhort Time in this World, into a bleſſed Eternity in the next.

2. The ſecond Thing which ſhould employ our Time, is the Works of our Callings. Though there be no more than one general Calling, the Calling of Religion, which we are all of us admitted into, and do all of us make Profeſſion

ſeſſion of, yet there are a great many particular Callings which we are brought up to, and placed in. And theſe particular Callings are of different Kinds, for ſome do require the Labour of the Body, others the Labour of the Mind, and others the Labour of both Body and Mind. And every particular Calling hath ſome peculiar Work and Employment belonging to it. And every Perſon ſhould ſpend ſo much of his Time as he can ſpare from the holy Offices of Religion, and the neceſſary Refreſhments of Nature, in the Works of his own Calling; for this is what God hath by Nature given us Faculties for, and does by his Word oblige us to. And this is neceſſary both for ourſelves, and for the World. It is neceſſary for ourſelves, to keep us from Idleneſs, which otherwiſe we ſhould fall into, and be ruined by. For we are active Beings, made for Action, and if we be not employed in that which is Good, we ſhall be employed in that which is Ill. And this is neceſſary for the World too, to miniſter to thoſe many Wants and Neceſſities which all Mankind are liable to, and do labour under; for the World

ſubſiſts upon Labour, upon the Labour of the Body and the Mind, and is upholden by it: And without it the whole Earth would ſoon become one great Wilderneſs, and all Mankind muſt in a ſhort Time periſh from off the Face of it. We are indeed chiefly made for another World, but we muſt take this World in our Way to it: And whilſt we are in this World, we muſt be ſupported and maintained in it; and this Support and Maintenance is owing to God's Bleſſing upon the Labours of Men.

3. The third Thing which ſhould employ our Time, are the neceſſary Refreſhments of our Natures. Such is the State of our Souls and Bodies in this World, that they cannot ſubſiſt without daily Refreſhments; for our Bodies are continually waſting, and often oppreſſed with Wearineſs, and muſt be ſupported by frequent Supplies of Nouriſhment, and conſtant Returns of Reſt. And our Souls do ſo much depend upon our Bodies, that they cannot continue long in any earneſt Exerciſes, or buſy Employments, but they muſt be now and then relieved by ſome little Unbendings and Diverſions. This makes it neceſſary for

us

is to ſpend ſome of our Time in the neceſſary Refreſhments of our Souls and Bodies, that we may be enabled to perform the Offices of Religion with a becoming Vigour, and the Works of our Callings with a ſuitable Diligence.

And thus I have gone through the firſt Thing propounded, and conſidered the Nature of thoſe Things which ſhould employ our Time, the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreſhments of our Natures.

I ſhall proceed to the

II. Second Thing propounded, and ſhew what kind of Method is proper to be obſerved by us, in the dividing our Time between theſe Things. Since we have many Things to do, and can't do them all together and at once, but muſt do them ſucceſſively one after another, we ſhould range them all into ſome kind of Order and Method, and allot to each of them their diſtinct Times and Seaſons. Now the proper Method would be, to begin the Day with pious Meditation, devout Prayers, and careful reading ſome Portion of Scripture, and other good Books, ſo far as we are capable of it, and have Leiſure for it, always thanking

God for his Preſervation of us the Night paſt, commending ourſelves to the Protection of his Grace and Providence the preſent Day, and reſolving, with his Help, to ſerve him in it, by doing thoſe Duties we ſhall have an Opportunity of, and avoiding thoſe Sins we ſhall be tempted to. And after this, we ſhould proceed to the Works and Buſineſs of our Callings, allotting at convenient Diſtances of Time, ſuch Portions of it, as are neceſſary for the Refreſhment of our Natures; mingling with both our Work and Refreſhment, ſuch pious Meditations and devout Ejaculations, as may ſanctify both to us: And then we ſhould conclude the Day as we began it, with ſome holy Offices, ſuch as diligent Reading, pious Meditations, careful Self-Examination, and devout Prayer; always thanking God for the Good we have done, or received, confeſſing to him the Sins we have committed, and the Duties we have neglected, imploring of him the Forgiveneſs of them, reſolving againſt them for the Time to come, committing ourſelves to the Care of his good Providence the Night preſent, and employing our waking Portions of it in

ſome

ſome ſhort Acts of Praiſe, Thankſgiving, or Prayer. Some ſuch Method as this we ſhould preſcribe to ourſelves, and obſerve ſo far as we can, in the ſpending of our ordinary Days. And though the great Duties of Religion ſhould be done by us every Day, and we ſhould every Day worſhip God, and every Day commemorate his Benefits, and every Day reflect on our Sins, yet a private Exerciſe of theſe Duties is not ſufficient; for both the Honour of God, and Edification of ourſelves and others, do require a publick Performance of them. And therefore God himſelf, and the Church by an Authority from him, have ſet apart ſome ſolemn Days for the publick Adminiſtration of the holy Offices of Religion, and do oblige all Perſons to a conſtant and regular Performance of them. Theſe Days are the Lord's Days, and the Feſtivals and Faſts of the Church. And as we ſhould upon theſe Days employ ourſelves more in the Service of God, and leſs in our own; ſo we ſhould lay aſide all our worldly Buſineſs on the Lord's Days, and abate, if we can conveniently, ſome Part of it on the other Days, that we may have Leiſure to meet

together in Publick, and join in thoſe Offices which are there adminiſtered; and to enlarge our Devotions in private, by adding to them ſuch Prayers, Reading, and Meditations, as are ſuitable to the Occaſions; always praiſing and thanking God for the Mercies commemorated in the Feſtivals, and beſeeching him to give us Grace to live anſwerably to thoſe Mercies; and confeſſing and lamenting thoſe Sins which we are to be humbled for on the Faſts, and beſeeching God to ſhew Mercy towards us, and to turn away from us the Judgments which we have deſerved by thoſe Sins. Theſe are the great Ends for which theſe Days were ſet apart by God and his Church, and we ſhould employ ſo much as we can of theſe Days to theſe Ends, in Obedience to their Inſtitution of them. And to encourage us in this holy Employment, we ſhould conſider, that the more Time we ſpend in the Worſhip and Service of God, the greater Comfort we ſhall find in it in this World, and the greater Reward we ſhall receive for it in that World which is to come.

And thus I have gone thro' the ſecond Thing propounded, and ſhewn you what

kind

kind of Method is proper to be obſerved by us in the dividing our Time, between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreſhments of our Natures. I ſhall now proceed to the

III. Third Thing propounded, and give you ſome Rules to be obſerved in the Performance of theſe Things at their proper Seaſons.

1. The firſt of thoſe Things, wherein ſome Portion of our Time ſhould be employed, are the holy Offices of Religion; and the Rules which I ſhall give to be obſerved by you in the Exerciſe of theſe Offices, are theſe following ones:

1. Be faithful and conſtant in theſe holy Offices at their proper Seaſons, and never omit them, unleſs you be taken off from them by ſome Work of Neceſſity or Charity; for the proper Seaſon for theſe holy Offices, lays an Obligation upon you to perform them; and conſequently to neglect them at that Time, either through Wilfulneſs or Careleſsneſs, is a Breach of that Obligation. Beſides, by a conſtant Performance of theſe holy Offices at their proper Seaſons, we ſhall bring ourſelves to a Habit of performing them; and that, by Degrees,

Degrees, will make it ſo eaſy and delightful to us to perform them, that it will at length be as great an Uneaſineſs to be kept from theſe holy Offices, as it was at firſt to be brought to them; for it will fare with us in theſe holy Offices, as it does in our common Meals, we ſhall find ſomething in ourſelves to put us in Mind of them, and call us to them at their ſet Times.

2. Be very reverent, attentive, and devout in your Performance of theſe holy Offices. The Offices of Religion are holy Offices, Offices ſeparated from common, and conſecrated to ſacred Uſes. This makes a mighty Difference between theſe holy Offices of Religion, and the common Actions of the World, and you ſhould take Care to preſerve this Diſtinction between them, by a ſuitable Behaviour at them. For to carry ourſelves in the publick Churches as we do in private Houſes; to ſpeak to God as we do to one another; to hear his holy Word as we do common Talk; and to receive the bleſſed Sacrament as we do an ordinary Meal, is very unſuitable to the Greatneſs of his Majeſty, the Sacredneſs of his Houſe, and the Holineſs of his Inſtitu-

ſtitutions. This is to confound all Diſtinction of Perſons and Things, and to make all Places and Actions alike, and would in a little Time leave no ſuch Thing as any divine Worſhip in the World: For to worſhip God, is to honour him; but we cannot be ſaid to honour him, unleſs we ſhew a peculiar Regard to him in all our Communications with him. And therefore you ſhould take Care, all poſſible Care, to perform all the holy Offices of Religion in a holy Manner, in ſuch a Manner as is ſome Way ſuitable to the Nature of them, with the moſt compoſed Temper of Mind, and awful Behaviour of Body, to ſhew that you are ſerious and in good Earneſt in them, and do mind what you are about, and whom you are concerned with.

3. Do not reſt in a bare Performance of theſe holy Offices, but have a due Regard to the Effect of them upon your Hearts and Lives: For the great End of theſe holy Offices, is to inſtruct you in the Will of God, and to enable you to live according to that bleſſed Will. Thus you ſhould hear the Word of God, to learn from thence what it is which he

requires

requires of you, that you may make it your great Care and Endeavour to perform it. You ſhould join in the Prayers of the Church, to obtain from God his Help, to enable you to ſerve him, by doing every Thing you know he commands, and avoiding every Thing you know he forbids: And you ſhould receive the holy Sacrament, to lay a new Obligation upon yourſelves to make good the Terms of your Baptiſmal Covenant with God, and to receive from him freſh Supplies of Grace, to ſtrengthen you in the fulfilling of that Obligation. This is what you ſhould all aim at, in the Uſe of theſe holy Offices: And unleſs you receive theſe Benefits from them, you do but deceive yourſelves in the Uſe of them; for the great End of theſe holy Offices, is a holy Life. They are only the Means to bring you to it, and improve you in it. And if you do not perform them in ſuch a Manner as to make yourſelves holy by them, they are no more than empty Forms, and inſignificant Actions. For the beſt Means in the World ſignify nothing to us, any further than they produce and promote the End they were appointed for. And

therefore

therefore you ſhould not reſt in a bare Performance of theſe holy Offices, but make it your great Care and Endeavour to improve yourſelves by them in all thoſe Graces and Virtues which the Goſpel requires of us.

2. The ſecond Thing wherein ſome Portion of our Time ſhould be employed, are the Works of our Callings. And the Rules which I ſhall give to be obſerved by you in the Performance of theſe Works, are theſe following ones:

1. Be honeſt and conſcientious in the Works of your Calling. The great End of your Calling is, to make you uſeful and profitable Members of the World, by miniſtering to the Neceſſities and Conveniencies of it. And the Way for you to anſwer this End, is by an honeſt and conſcientious Diſcharge of the Works of your Callings; the doing by others in thoſe Works, as you would they ſhould do by you, were you in their Circumſtances, and they in yours; for this will make you uſeful to all thoſe who have any Dealings with you. Never then oppreſs or over-reach one another, but make a Conſcience of whatever you do: And then your Callings will become a great

great Bleſſing to the World, and your-ſelves the happy Inſtruments of promoting the Good and Welfare of it.

2. Be diligent and careful in the Works of your Callings; for you are all no more than Servants in the great Family of this World, to your Lord and Maſter, the Almighty Governor of it. And the Works of your ſeveral Callings are the Buſineſs he has intruſted you with, and obliged you to. And you ſhould not be idle and negligent in your Buſineſs, but careful and diligent; becauſe Care and Diligence are the Duties of Servants, and what every Maſter expects from them.

3. Look up to God in all the Works of your Callings, and beg his Bleſſing upon them; for though your own Care and Diligence be neceſſary, becauſe God governs the World by Means; yet it is his Bleſſing which muſt crown your Care and Diligence with Succeſs, and give a happy Iſſue to them; becauſe it is not the Means which do give that good Iſſue and Succeſs, but God by thoſe Means.

4. Be not too anxious or over-ſolicitous in the Work of your Callings: For it is your Buſineſs only to take a prudent

prudent Care, and uſe a proper Diligence, and beg God's Bleſſing upon your Care and Diligence, and then to leave the Iſſue to the all-wiſe Diſpoſal of God's Providence; becauſe that is his Work, and not yours. Do then your Part, what belongs to you, and leave God to do his, what belongs to him: And do not perplex and diſquiet yourſelves about the Iſſue of your Affairs, but reſt ſatisfied that they are in much better Hands than your own, and will be ordered for you far better than you could order them for yourſelves.

3. The Third Thing wherein ſome Portion of our Time muſt be employed, are the Refreſhments of our Natures. And the Rules which I ſhall give to be obſerved by you in theſe Refreſhments, are theſe following ones.

1. Be temperate in your Diet, and eat not to indulge and gratify a nice Palate, or a wanton Appetite, but to ſerve the real Neceſſities of your Natures, to repair the Decays of your Bodies, and to continue them in Health and Strength, ſufficient to diſcharge your particular Duties to God, your Neighbours, and yourſelves.

2. Be

2. Be ſober in your Drinking, and obſerve ſuch Rules and Meaſures in it, as never to drown or diſorder your Reaſon, impair or weaken your Conſtitution, miſ-ſpend or ſquander away your Money or your Time; but only to quench your Thirſt, digeſt your Meat, and chear and raiſe your ſinking Spirits, when oppreſſed with Faintneſs or Sickneſs, Melancholy or worldly Trouble.

3. Be moderate in your Sleep, and uſe it only to relieve the Wearineſs of your Bodies, and the Faintneſs of your Spirits; not to indulge a ſlothful Temper, or a Habit of Lazineſs.

4. Be regular in your Recreations and Diverſions, uſe none but lawful ones, and thoſe purely to refreſh your tired Spirits, and to make you the more fit for Buſineſs, not to take a great Part of your Time from off your Hands, and to become a Trade and Employment to you.

And thus I have given you ſome few ſhort Rules to be obſerved by you in the Performance of the holy Offices of Religion, the Works of your Callings, and the Refreſhments of your Natures, at their proper Seaſons; and ſhall now proceed to the laſt Thing propounded, which was, IV.

IV. Fourthly and laſtly, To offer ſome Arguments to perſuade you to endeavour to live, ſo far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule. And theſe Arguments ſhall be taken from the Advantages of ſuch an orderly and regular Life. Now, many and great are the Advantages of ſuch a Life; but I can only ſet before you a few of them, and I muſt be very ſhort in them too, becauſe the Time will not allow me to be long.

1. The firſt Advantage of ſuch a regular Life is, the bringing us to a Fixedneſs and Conſtancy of Temper: We are naturally Fickle and Inconſtant, always running from one Thing to another, and never fixing long upon any Thing. But the living for ſome Time in a Method, and by Rule, will correct this Fickleneſs and Inconſtancy of Temper, and bring us to a Habit of Steadineſs and Conſtancy.

2. The ſecond Advantage of ſuch a regular Life, is the giving us the greater Facility or Eaſineſs in doing every Thing well; for by often beginning the ſame Thing, and doing it over and over again, we get a Habit of doing it; and what we do by Habit, we do with a great

great deal of Readineſs and Eaſe: And what we do readily and eaſily, we generally do well.

3. The third Advantage of ſuch a regular Life, is the making us the more perfect in what we do: For it is become a common Saying amongſt us, that Practice or Uſe makes Perfectneſs. And this Saying is founded upon a general Obſervation, or Experience in all worldly Affairs. And this is as true in religious ones too; for we proceed there from Acts, to Habits of Virtue; and the oftener we perform the Act of any Virtue, the ſooner we ſhall attain to a Habit of that Virtue, and the more perfect we ſhall grow in that Habit. So that by a daily Exerciſe of Piety and Devotion in the holy Offices of Religion, of Honeſty and Diligence in the Works of our Callings, of Moderation and Sobriety in the Refreſhments of our Natures, we ſhall ſtill more and more improve ourſelves in theſe Virtues, and riſe by Degrees to the greateſt Perfection in them.

4. The fourth Advantage of ſuch a regular Life, is the ſanctifying all our Time and the making our whole Lives to

to be a continual Service of God; because whatſoever we are about, will be either a Part of his Service, or in order to it. The Acts of Religion, and the Works of our Calling, will be an actual ſerving of God; and our Eating and Drinking, and even our Recreations, will be a fitting ourſelves for his Service. And thus our whole Time may be in ſome Meaſure ſanctified, and employed in the Service of our God.

5. And, laſtly, The fifth Advantage of ſuch a regular Life, is a preparing and fitting ourſelves for a bleſſed Eternity: Becauſe by thus dividing our Time between the Offices of Religion, the Works of our Callings, and the Refreſhments of our Natures, and allotting to theſe Offices, Works and Refreſhments, their proper Seaſons, and obſerving at all Times, as far as we can, theſe Seaſons, we ſhall be able to give a good Account of our Time, when we are, at the laſt Day, called to it: and may then expect to receive from our great Lord and Maſter the Reward of it, in that joyful Sentence: *Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into thy Maſter's Joy.*

And

And thus I have gone through what I propounded to do upon the Words of my Text: For I have,

I. Conſidered the Nature of thoſe Things which ſhould employ our Time.

II. I have ſhewn you what Kind of Method is proper to be obſerved by us, in the dividing our Time between thoſe Things.

III. I have given ſome Rules to be obſerved by us, in the Performance of theſe Things at their proper Seaſons.

IV. And laſtly, I have offered ſome Arguments to perſuade you to endeavour to live, ſo far as you can, in a Method, and by Rule.

And now what remains for me to do more, at this Time, than to beſeech Almighty God to give us all Grace ſo to improve our ſhort Time in this World, that we may receive the Reward of it in a bleſſed Eternity in that World which is to come, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? To whom, *&c. Amen.*

FINIS.

13.

THE

DUTIES OF THE POOR;

PARTICULARLY

IN THE EDUCATION

OF

THEIR CHILDREN;

IN AN

ADDRESS FROM A MINISTER TO HIS PARISHIONERS.

BY

F. T. TRAVELL, A.M.

RECTOR OF UPPER-SLAUGHTER, GLOCESTERSHIRE.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON, NO. 62,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

By Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1799.

Lately published by the same Author,

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THE

DUTIES

OF

THE POOR.

My Friends and Neighbours,

THE near relation which I have ſo long borne to you, as your Miniſter, and the kind manner in which you have, all in your turns, often received my advice and inſtructions, convinces me that you will not be diſpleaſed with any attempt of mine that may prove uſeful to you. It is my inclination, as well as my duty, to render you every ſervice in my power; but as increaſing infirmities and advancing years may probably make me leſs and leſs capable of giving you public inſtruction, I have choſen this method of pointing out to you your various duties: partly as a mark of my regard for you, but ſtill more in the hopes, that by

having my advice conveyed to you in this manner, you will frequently dwell upon it, and endeavour heartily to put it in practice.

However unable I may be to be useful to you in the public service of the Church, it by no means lessens my obligation to serve you in private: it does indeed greatly increase it; and I may fairly apply the words of the prophet SAMUEL, and say, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you* *. Highly blameable should I be, if I did not offer up to God my prayers for you, and endeavour, to the best of my power, still to instruct you in your duty. And when you consider, how great are the blessings you all receive from God, you cannot but confess your obligation, to obey his laws, as his true and faithful servants.

It is not for his own sake that God requires our obedience; we can add nothing

* 1 Samuel xii. 23, 24.

to

o his happineſs, nor take away any thing
om it; but it is one of the ſtrongeſt mo-
ives to a good and uſeful life, that we thereby
onſult our own real happineſs;—our hap-
ineſs in this world as well as in the next.

In order therefore to aſſiſt your endea-
ours towards the attainment of ſo import-
nt a point as your preſent and future hap-
ineſs, I ſhall lay before you ſome of the
hief duties belonging to your ſituation in
ife; by the due performance of which, you
may generally inſure comfort to your-
elves, together with the approbation of
God and your own conſciences.

You are moſt of you placed in that humble
ſtation, which requires conſtant labour and
activity, for the maintenance of yourſelves
and your families: the firſt duty therefore
which I ſhall recommend to you, is *Induſtry*.

WE are all ſent into life to act our ſeveral
parts, ſome to labour with the head, others
with the hands, but no man was intended to
be idle. Many of thoſe, who are bleſſed
with large and affluent fortunes, are obliged
to act a very laborious part; and even they

who are the moſt independent, muſt find ſome buſineſs or occupation for themſelves if they would preſerve their health, or have a reliſh for any enjoyment.—But to *you*, who muſt labour for your daily bread, induſtry is abſolutely neceſſary: *you* will not be the only ſufferers by the neglect of it: when *you* are idle, your children muſt be ſtarving. An interruption from labour by ſickneſs only for a few days, will be ſeverely felt; and if idleneſs be added to thoſe accidental hindrances, which all muſt ſometimes feel, diſtreſs and ruin muſt be the conſequence.

But theſe are not the only bad effects of a want of induſtry; all habits grow ſtronger by indulgence, and if idleneſs once become habitual, both the mind and the body will be leſs inclined to labour: ſtill, ſubſiſtence muſt be procured; and if a man will not work for his bread, he muſt either rely upon the bounty of others, or he will too probably be induced to ſteal, or take it by force. I ſcarcely need point out to you the miſery of ſuch as procure a wretched ſubſiſtence by begging, or the wickedneſs of thoſe who live by theft and plunder: I would rather

lead

lead your minds to the conſideration of the comfort which you may enjoy from a habit of honeſt induſtry, and a due uſe of thoſe means which God has put in your power. The wiſe Providence of God has allotted to mankind a variety of ranks and ſtations, all contributing to the general good of the whole. While you are labouring for the maintenance of your families, you are fulfilling a principal part of the duties of that ſtation in which his goodneſs has placed you, and you lay a claim to his future kindneſs and protection. Beſides, they who are induſtrious, will ſeldom fail to meet with encouragement and aſſiſtance; charity is never happier than in beſtowing her bounty upon thoſe who will be ſure to make a good uſe of it.

IN order to make your induſtry more uſeful, you muſt not neglect to add to it *Frugality*. The moſt ample fortune may be diſſipated, without ſome attention to economy; but with frugality and proper management, a very ſlender income may be enough, and to ſpare. In times of difficulty, the utmoſt induſtry will ſometimes be ſcarce ſufficient to ſupply the wants of a numerous family;

and if the little that comes in be waſted, or applied to improper purpoſes, it is eaſier to foreſee, than to prevent, the ruinous effects which muſt follow. It is ſurpriſing to obſerve the difference between one poor family and another, where the income is equally ſmall, and there is an equal number of children; now this difference is owing to frugality and good management in one family, and an entire neglect of it in the other. In one caſe we ſee the children decently clothed and fed, with clean and healthy countenances, reflecting credit on the good conduct of their parents, whoſe dwelling, however ſmall and mean, is a pattern of neatneſs. In the other caſe, we are offended every ſtep we take, all is confuſion and diſorder, rags and filth; and we can ſcarce be perſuaded, that the two families have the ſame means of ſubſiſtence.

In times like the preſent, when vanity and ſhow have ſo much influence over every rank, the plain duty of frugality will be too apt to be neglected:—neither the food, nor clothing, which our own country can ſupply, will be thought ſufficient, even by thoſe who are put to difficulties to procure either.

But

But ſurely the neceſſities of nature ſhould be ſatisfied, be the fare ever ſo plain and homely, before far-fetched luxuries be ſought for; and the parent would be highly blameable, who, in order to trick out one of her children in flaunting ornaments, ſhould pinch the reſt of them in food and decent clothing.

But beſides the abſolute neceſſity of frugality to your preſent comfort and ſupport, you will gain a laſting advantage from it, if it enable you to lay up ſomething againſt the time of ſickneſs or old age. Much cannot be expected to be done in this way by thoſe who have families to maintain; but when times and ſeaſons are favourable, a little foreſight and good management may enable even *them* to ſave ſomething that may prevent their being burthenſome to the public. They, who have only themſelves to ſupport, will be unpardonable if they do not look forward to the decline of life, when, without ſuch prudent foreſight, they may be forced to depend upon charity for ſubſiſtence.

I will juſt add too, that you ſhould remember the parable of the widow's mite; they

who are poor themſelves, may find ſtill poorer, to whom the moſt trifling aſſiſtance will be acceptable: We are told in Scripture, that *if we have much, we muſt give plenteouſly, but if we have little, we muſt do our diligence gladly to give of that little; for by that means we ſhall gather to ourſelves a good reward in the day of neceſſity* *.

TO induſtry and frugality muſt be added a ſtrict regard to *Honeſty* in all your dealings. —This is required by the poſitive law of God, nor will the laws of man diſpenſe with the breach of it. I ſhall not, I believe, be miſtaken in ſaying, that diſhoneſty, of ſome kind or other, is a ſin, which the lower claſſes of people are too apt to commit. This perhaps may ariſe in ſome meaſure from their ignorance, and from being accuſtomed to ſee trifling inſtances of this kind overlooked and unpuniſhed. But if diſhoneſty be ſinful, as it undoubtedly is, the ſmalleſt inſtance of it is ſo in its degree; and when once we allow ourſelves to go beyond the bounds of

* Tobit iv. 8, 9.

ſtrict

ſtrict truth and honeſty, we know not where we ſhall ſtop. It is from ſmall beginnings that *every* ſin firſt takes its riſe, and therefore it is of the utmoſt conſequence that theſe ſhould be firmly reſiſted. The moſt determined villains, who have forfeited their lives for their diſhoneſty, little thought to what ſhocking lengths they ſhould be carried, when once they left the ſtraight path of uprightneſs. But the progreſs of every vice is rapid, and quickly hurries men on to the commiſſion of crimes, which in the beginning they could not have thought of without trembling. Whenever therefore you are tempted in the ſmalleſt degree to be diſhoneſt, either in buying or ſelling, in defrauding your neighbour of his property, or in pilfering any thing that does not belong to you; firmly reſiſt the temptation in the firſt inſtance, reſolve to baniſh from your minds every thought of deceit and fraud, every ſecret deſire of unjuſt gain. The inward conſciouſneſs of upright behaviour, and the having preſerved your peace of mind unbroken, will give you a ſatisfaction which all the ill-gotten treaſures in the world could never beſtow.

But beſides this, the old maxim, that *honeſty is the beſt policy*, will ſeldom fail to ſtand good. If the crooked arts of diſhoneſty and fraud do ſometimes appear to ſucceed, there is no depending upon them, and the world in general will ſteadily oppoſe them. But the honeſt man will be ſure to find friends; all men of worth and principle will be ready to take his part, and to encourage and aſſiſt him in thoſe difficulties and diſtreſſes, to which all are unavoidably ſubject.

One kind of honeſty, which I would particularly recommend to you, is a ſtrict regard to the due performance of whatever is committed to your truſt. The man who is diligent in his maſter's work, no longer than when his eye is upon him; who only waits for his abſence to ſlacken his induſtry, deſerves not the character of an honeſt man; he certainly robs his maſter of his time, and if he continues to indulge that idle diſpoſition, will too probably be induced, when opportunity offers, to rob him of his property.

THE next duty I ſhall point out to you is *Sobriety*.—The practice of this is as neceſſary

to

o your well-being as any of the former du-
ies, nor indeed can they well ſubſiſt without
t. Induſtry and frugality can never be ef-
ectually maintained without a ſtrict attention
o ſobriety: and if intemperance become ha-
bitual, it is to be feared, that even honeſty
will ſometimes yield to the ſtrength of the
emptation. If the utmoſt you can earn by
conſtant labour be barely ſufficient for the
decent maintenance of your families, you
can ſurely very ill ſpare any part of it for the
ale-houſe. Your time is, or ought to be, ſo
fully employed the whole week, that you can
have no leiſure for going there, except on a
Sunday; and *that* is the moſt unfit day of
all for the purpoſe. When you have been
ſpending the former part of the day in attend-
ing the public worſhip of God, in thanking
him for his continual mercies, in begging his
bleſſing upon your honeſt labours, and in be-
ſeeching him to keep you from evil of every
kind; will you plunge yourſelves headlong
into the midſt of evil; will you run the riſk of
loſing all the good you got at church, by fre-
quenting the company of thoſe who ſeldom
think of God, or ſpeak of him, but by taking

his

his holy name in vain? You cannot be ignorant how improper ſuch a conduct would be.

But beſides the great impropriety of frequenting the ale-houſe on a Sunday, and the loſs of time in doing it on the other days of the week, conſider how much it expoſes you to the dangers of evil company. If a ſober and honeſt man be ſometimes ſeen in public houſes, it is well known that they who conſtantly frequent them are rarely men of reſpectable characters; and it is there that the plans are commonly laid for the robbing and plundering their neighbours. If you are ever ſo well diſpoſed when you go there, you know not into what miſchiefs you may be led before you part; one cup draws on another, a falſe ſhame induces you to do like the reſt, and when once you are heated with liquor, and have loſt your reaſon, you may commit ſuch actions as you will bitterly repent of all your life.

Another ill conſequence of the want of ſobriety, is the fatal effects it produces upon the health, injuring the conſtitution, depriving a man of that ſtrength and activity upon which he depends for his livelihood, and laying a foun-

foundation for thoſe diſeaſes, which frequently cut him off before his time, and leave a wretched family to lament his folly and imprudence.—They who are not accuſtomed to ſee the miſeries of the poor in large manufacturing towns, cannot fully judge of the ſad effects which are produced by a habit of drinking; they are ſuch, as ſhould make the poor in the country very thankful for their ſituation, and very careful to avoid a practice ſo full of miſery and ruin.

CLOSELY connected with ſobriety is *Chaſtity*; a virtue ſtrictly commanded by God's laws, and the neglect of which produces infinite miſery and diſtreſs. Moſt of the evils which men bring upon themſelves, are owing to the want of keeping their paſſions in due ſubjection; if we do not get the maſtery over them, they will quickly get the maſtery over us. A habit of chaſtity, in particular, ſhould be formed from early youth, and parents ſhould be very attentive to keep their children within the ſtrict bounds of decency both in their words and actions.

The breach of chaſtity is not only a heinous offence againſt the ſtrict law of Chriſtianity, which

which requires a purity of thought, of conversation, and of behaviour; but it is followed by a loss of character, and by a train of evils, destructive of every comfort and happiness.—They, who have offended in this way in their youth, and have been drawn into a sinful connexion before marriage, are too apt to think they make full amends by marrying the partners of their guilt; but they must shew a long course of good behaviour, before they can regain the good opinion of the world; and with respect to the forgiveness of God, both for this and every other offence against chastity, they must know that they can lay no claim to it, but by a hearty repentance, and a thorough change of life. The best method which parents can take to preserve their children from this sin, is to cultivate in them a strict regard to the sacred law of God, to keep them constantly and usefully employed, and as soon as they are able to maintain themselves, to procure for them decent services or trades; nothing is so great an encouragement to vice as idleness; and experience has often shewn the ill consequences of suffering children that are grown up to loiter at home

with

with their parents, inſtead of their being ſent out into the world to be uſefully employed.

ANOTHER duty, which I ſhall recommend to you, is *Contentment*; a duty required from men of every ſtation, and without which there can be no true happineſs. As moſt of you are placed in a low ſituation of life, and are ſometimes expoſed to the ſufferings of poverty and want, you may perhaps imagine, that the practice of this duty cannot be much expected from you. But of this you may be aſſured, that God is not partial in the diſtribution of his bleſſings to mankind, and that every ſtation has the means of happineſs, and conſequently of contentment, in its power. You have not, indeed, the luxuries of the rich, their ſplendid equipages, their coſtly tables, their gaudy apparel; you have not the full command of your time, nor can you afford to waſte it in folly and idleneſs. But you have at leaſt as good health as they have; and when it is otherwiſe, charity has provided abundant aſſiſtance. Your own induſtry can ſupply you with the neceſſaries of life, and by frugality and good management, with many

many of the comforts of it too. When ſeaſons are unfavourable, and difficulties preſs upon thoſe who have numerous families, they will be likely to meet with aſſiſtance, if their paſt good conduct entitle them to it:—God will raiſe up friends for thoſe who reverence his laws, or as David happily expreſſes it, *I have been young and now am old, and yet ſaw I never the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread**. Then, conſider the cares and anxiety which riches bring with them, the dangers to which they frequently expoſe men, and the imaginary and teazing wants which they create: conſider this, and you will not envy the uncertain poſſeſſion of them, but will daily bleſs the goodneſs of God, for having placed you in a ſtation, where you have the means of making yourſelves and your children happy; where you are free from many of the temptations to which others are expoſed, and where your being conſtantly employed is of itſelf a ſource of happineſs, which your betters have too often cauſe to envy you.

* Pſalm xxxvii. 25.

IN order to render contentment ſtill eaſier to you, I ſhall adviſe you to add to it *Humility*, which is a temper of mind ſuited to the weak and dependent nature of man, cloſely connected with the mild duties of Chriſtianity, and with the ſtation in which you are placed. Pride and haughtineſs are very offenſive and diſguſting, wherever they are ſeen; but they are particularly unbecoming in thoſe, who muſt work for their bread, and who are often indebted to the bounty of others for their ſubſiſtence. It is abſolutely neceſſary for the general good of ſociety, that there ſhould be various orders and degrees of men; ſociety indeed cannot ſubſiſt without it: there muſt be ſome to govern, and ſome to be governed, there muſt be ſome to procure food and clothing for themſelves and others, and there muſt be ſome to employ them, and to reward their labours.

Strange and wild notions have been ſpread abroad of late, as if it were deſigned by Providence that all mankind ſhould be upon a level, and that none ſhould have power or diſtinction above the reſt; ſuch abſurd opinions ſerve only to create confuſion, and to make

make the lower orders of people diſcontented with their ſtation. Were it poſſible for ſuch a ſcheme to take place, your condition would be far from being bettered by it; famine and diſeaſe, rapine and miſery, would be the lamentable conſequence of it. Learn then to be content with your preſent uſeful ſtations; reſpect thoſe whoſe talents and ſituation make them your ſuperiors; check that pride of heart which would lead you to envy and diſcontent; and endeavour to cultivate that humility which is well pleaſing in the ſight of God, which will gain you the eſteem of your neighbours, and make you valuable members of the community.

A moſt important duty to be added to the reſt, is *Charity*, that amiable virtue, which ſo particularly diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian religion. By charity I do not mean the giving of alms, for that is only a ſmall branch of it, and few in compariſon are able to practiſe it: but I mean benevolence, compaſſion, loving-kindneſs, and a deſire to do all the good in your power. Some of the

lower

ower claſs of mankind are apt to complain, that, however well diſpoſed they may be, they have no opportunities of doing good; as if ſo godlike a virtue as charity were only in the reach of the great, or wealthy.

It is a great miſtake to ſuppoſe, that you are not capable of aſſiſting the poor, becauſe you cannot ſpare any thing to relieve their neceſſities; in fact, you may be extremely aſſiſtant to each other, by kind advice, by friendly conſolation, by wholeſome inſtruction, by viſiting and attending one another in ſickneſs and diſtreſs, by *rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep* *. Theſe are the trueſt kinds of charity, and ſuch as every one may have frequent opportunities of practiſing.

What a happy world would this be, if every man followed the golden rule, of *doing to others what we would have them do to us.*—Take this for your guide, and you will never be at a loſs how to act, you will never want means of doing good. Leave this rule to your children, as the moſt valuable legacy

* Rom. xii. 15.

you

you can bequeath them. Teach them by your example, as well as by your leſſons, that *to do good* is the chief buſineſs of life, and that if they will indeed be the diſciples of Chriſt, they muſt have love one to another. How directly contrary to this benevolent diſpoſition do we ſometimes find the behaviour of the poor; inſtead of taking pleaſure in the exerciſe of kindneſs and charity, they are too apt to indulge a ſpirit of envy and jealouſy, of malice and ſlander. They ſeem to grudge their neighbours any little favours and advantages which they may happen to poſſeſs: they take a malicious pleaſure in their misfortunes; and never appear ſo happy as when they are ſpreading falſe and ſlanderous reports againſt the innocent and unwary, and blackening the characters of thoſe who have had the misfortune to ſlip. Want and poverty ſurely ſhould give milder and more affectionate feelings!

I have ſpoken pretty fully on the duties you owe to yourſelves, and to your neighbours, but have not yet particularly mentioned thoſe you owe to God: in general, however, theſe duties are ſo cloſely connected,

ected, that by fulfilling the one, we fulfil he other alſo. We can ſeldom do more cceptable ſervice to God, than by ſhewing indneſs to one another, and doing the duies of our ſtation. But piety has its claims s well as benevolence; and ſince we have eceived ſo much from God, we ought to make him all the return in our power. When we conſider the numberleſs bleſſings beſtowed upon us, we cannot ſurely refuſe our gratitude to the great Author of them. It was He that called us into being, and made us capable of enjoying happineſs, and of being uſeful in the world. It is He that hath given us health and ſtrength, and hath preſerved us from a multitude of evils; and whoſe Providence continually watches over us for good. But beyond all this, it is He that hath redeemed us from ſin and death, and made us capable of eternal happineſs in his heavenly kingdom.—Juſtly, therefore, may He expect that our hearts ſhould be full of gratitude for ſuch undeſerved mercies; that we ſhould reverence his holy name, and his word, and pay a ſtrict obedience to the laws of ſo good a God.

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To believe in God's Providence, to love him for his goodneſs, and to be fearful of offending him, are ſo plainly our duty, that one ſhould think nothing would eaſily prevent us from the practice of them. But we are ſuch weak and frail creatures, and are ſo liable to act contrary to our duty and true happineſs, that we have need of every means to keep us ſtedfaſt in the right path. It is upon this account, therefore, that prayer is ſo neceſſary a duty; being a confeſſion of our own weakneſs, an acknowledgment of God's power to help us, a claim upon his goodneſs to give us the aids of his grace, and an incitement to us to uſe our beſt endeavours to ſecond his divine aſſiſtance.

Let me intreat you then to perſevere in the habitual practice of prayer; fail not, every morning and evening, to thank God for his mercies, to implore his forgiveneſs, to beg his bleſſing upon your honeſt labours, and his protection from evil of every kind. The doing this conſtantly will take up very little time, and you will find infinite benefit from it, eſpecially if you make your families join in it. But remember, however ſhort your

prayers

prayers are, you muſt endeavour to repeat them with attention, and, above all, to conform your lives to them; for this is the true end of prayer, to make us holy, that we may be happy.

In addition to private and family devotion, one day in ſeven you are called upon to join in the united prayers of the congregation; to the due performance of which God has promiſed his peculiar bleſſing. So important as this duty is, you will not ſurely let a ſlight excuſe ever prevent your going to church; and if the younger part of your family require ſome attendance at home, the elder part may take their turns, ſo that each of the family may attend divine ſervice at leaſt once in the day.

But going to church, though it be a principal, is by no means the only part of your duty on the ſabbath: you will then have leiſure to look back upon the week paſt, to repent of any thing you may have done amiſs, and to make firm reſolutions againſt it for the future: you will have time to viſit your ſick neighbours, and to inſtruct your children, as well as to partake with them of

that domeſtic enjoyment which is the great ſweetener of life. The due obſervance of the ſabbath does not require any ſourneſs or ſeverity of manners, nor to be ſhut up from ſociety: when the public and private duties of the day have been duly performed, the concluſion of it may well be ſpent in pleaſant walks, in ſober and cheerful converſation; neither of which will be rendered the leſs pleaſant, nor the leſs cheerful, by reflections on God's bounty in furniſhing the beauties of the ſpring, the bleſſings of harveſt, the variety of flowers with which the fields are clothed, the numberleſs animals which contribute to the food and uſe of man, or thoſe ſplendid lights which hang like lamps in the heavens, and make ſome amends for the abſence of the ſun. The wonderful works of creation are a ſubject of aſtoniſhment, both to the learned and the ignorant, and lead the mind to the contemplation of that awful Being, *who ſpake and it was done, who commanded and it ſtood faſt* *.

I have now gone through the ſeveral duties I propoſed to point out to you, except

* Pſalm xxxiii. 9.

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the *Education of your Children.* This is a ſubject of ſo much conſequence, not only to parents, but to the world in general, that I have deferred the conſideration of it to the laſt, in order to give you more full directions with reſpect to it. Great complaints are made of the wickedneſs of the preſent age, and that mankind are growing more and more profligate;—I am rather inclined to doubt, whether this is ſo much the caſe as it is repreſented to be: corrupted as human nature is, vice will at all times too much prevail, and it will put on different appearances, according to the manners and faſhion of the times. Perhaps the caſe may be, that there is at preſent leſs deceit in the world than there may ſometimes have been, and therefore, wherever there is vice, it will be ſure to appear. However that may be, it is too true that there is always a great proportion of wickedneſs, and therefore it concerns us all to endeavour to ſtop the courſe of it, as well by our own example, as by our influence over others.

It is a common ſaying, that *the world would ſoon be better, if every one would mend one*; that is, himſelf: this is true, no doubt but the effect of it is more to be wiſhed than expected; for when ſin is become habitual it is no eaſy matter to ſhake it off; and though all may wiſh others to amend, yet too few will take the pains to amend themſelves. Our chief hopes, therefore, muſt be from the riſing generation; from thoſe whoſe minds are yet untainted by evil habits, and are ready to receive every good impreſſion that can be made upon them. That you all love your children, cannot admit of a doubt; nature hath taken effectual care of that, by implanting in you ſuch ſtrong affections towards them; but the beſt proof you can give of your love, is to bring them up in the way moſt likely to make them happy, and to teach them to do their duty to God and their neighbour.

I have laid down rules for the government of yourſelves, moſt of which will be of uſe in the management of your children; but in order to be more particular, the firſt thing

ing I would adviſe you to teach them, is *bedience*. It is a long time before young eople are at all capable of conducting themlves; and their minds want full as much ſiſtance from us as their bodies. Who ould not blame a parent, that, for want of ue care of a child in infancy, ſhould ſuffer to loſe the free uſe of its limbs? and ow fatal would be the neglect in ſuffering he will to grow crooked and perverſe, and bſtinately to follow its own headſtrong fanies. To prevent this growing evil you annot begin too ſoon; even before your children can ſpeak, it will be neceſſary to put ſome reſtraint upon their deſires, and to accuſtom them to ſubmit their will to yours. It is wonderful with how much eaſe the generality of children may be managed, if they are begun with early. Do not then let a falſe tenderneſs, and the fear of a little more trouble, prevail upon you to delay this neceſſary taſk; it *muſt* be done at ſome time or other, for your ſake as well as theirs; and if the foundation be early and happily laid, every thing will go on ſmoothly. Your children, having at firſt obeyed you from

habit, will ſoon be induced to do it from a ſenſe of duty, and from good principle. The improper indulgence of children is, after all, but a kind of ſelf-indulgence, and, like other ſelfiſh paſſions, requires to be corrected.

It is very common to hear parents complain, as their children grow up, that they are obſtinate and untractable:—they, who will be perſuaded to check them betimes, which may be done with all poſſible love and tenderneſs, will ſeldom have theſe complaints to make, but will find a preſent, as well as future, reward from their habit of compliance.

AFTER obedience, the next thing to be taught children, is the *Command of Themſelves*, or, in other words, the proper government of their paſſions. Few things are of more importance than this; for it is from the hurtful indulgence of the paſſions, that moſt of the evils of life take their beginning; ſo that if you check them at the fountain head, and betimes accuſtom your children to keep them under, you thereby put them in the way of ſtopping one of the greateſt cauſes of future

ture miſchief and miſery. There is as much difference, it is true, between the natural temper of men's minds, as there is in the ſhape and form of their bodies; and after all the pains that can be taken, ſomething of the original diſpoſition will ſtill remain.—But if the temper be attended to very early, and the child be led by degrees into a habit of checking and reſtraining its own unruly will, it is aſtoniſhing what a change may be wrought; greater indeed than moſt of us are aware of, or than they, who are unwilling to take the pains, may be inclined to believe. One great advantage of ſelf-command is this, that it is uſeful in every circumſtance of life, ſo that if a habit of it be obtained in one inſtance, there will be the leſs difficulty in gaining it in another: the child that has been long accuſtomed to check the firſt riſings of anger, will find a proportionable eaſe in reſtraining thoſe unruly paſſions, which are the attendants of a riper age.

I have purpoſely mentioned obedience, and ſelf-command, as neceſſary for the good of children even before the ſenſe of their

Duty to God: both becauſe the practice of thoſe will prepare the way for this duty, and as they may and ought to be taught them, long before they can have any notion of the Deity, and of their obligations to Him. But you cannot too ſoon give them ſuch notions of God and religion as their tender age is capable of: and as their laborious life, and the humble ſtation in which they will generally be placed, will put it out of their power to underſtand the more difficult parts of religion, you muſt be careful to enforce the practice of it as early and as habitually as poſſible. We are all ſtrangely governed by cuſtom and habit, eſpecially by ſuch habits as we have learned in our earlieſt years: be ſure then not to neglect giving them that habit, which is the moſt important of all others.—Teach them to love God, and to adore his fatherly goodneſs in giving them their daily bread, and providing them with many of the comforts of life. Direct them to put their chief confidence in him, and to make his will the guide of their lives. Teach them to fear his diſpleaſure, to reverence his name, to keep holy his ſabbath, to frequent

quent his church, to pray to him daily, and to conſider themſelves as always in his preſence.—Give them ſuch habits as theſe, and do not fear their wanting the knowledge of religion; they will feel the comfort of theſe habits as long as they live, and will bleſs your memory for them, long after you are at reſt in the ſilent grave.

With the duties we owe to God, are cloſely connected thoſe by which we are bound *to one another*; and indeed theſe are required of us in ſcripture, as the proof of our love to God:—*He that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how ſhall he love God whom he hath not ſeen* *? Let it therefore be one of your firſt cares, to ſow in the hearts of your children the good ſeeds of brotherly kindneſs, the mutual good-will, and univerſal benevolence; the tender affections towards each other, which nature has planted in them, muſt be cheriſhed and encouraged; but you muſt teach them not to limit their regard to their relations only, but to look upon all mankind as one great

* 1 John iv. 20.

mily, with whom they are intimately connected, and to whom they owe every good office that is in their power. Nothing is more oppoſite both to the precepts and ſpirit of Chriſtianity, than that envy and jealouſy, thoſe ſecret grudgings, and open repinings, at the welfare and ſucceſs of their neighbours, which too many are apt to entertain. Would you then diſcharge one of your principal duties as a parent? Be earneſt to ſtifle, in your children, every emotion of malice and ill-will, every tendency you can perceive in them towards a narrow ſelfiſh temper. Endeavour to make them ſenſible, that by promoting their neighbour's happineſs, they will greatly increaſe their own; and that by ſo doing they will beſt ſecure the favour of God, who hath taught us, that "all our doings without charity are nothing worth."

The next point I would recommend to you, is to be very ſtrict with your children in the article of *ſpeaking the truth*. Few things are of ſo much conſequence as this; honeſty, fidelity, and character, all depend upon it; and therefore every means muſt be employed

to make the practice of it eaſy and familiar to them. Let reward be ſure to follow ſpeaking the truth, and puniſhment never fail to be the conſequence of telling lies, and you will quickly gain your point. Even when they are guilty of faults, if they are willing to own them, you muſt not be backward in forgiving them; it will encourage an open behaviour, and you will gain their confidence by it, which will be ſure to give you a happy influence over them.—The good effects of conſtantly ſpeaking the truth will appear in every part of their lives; they will be juſt in their dealings, true to their promiſes, and faithful in the diſcharge of every duty. Whereas a habit of lying will produce hypocriſy and deceit, it will lay the foundation of fraud and diſhoneſty, and too probably lead the way to the commiſſion of the moſt notorious crimes.

Diligence and *Induſtry* are very important in every ſituation of life, but they are particularly neceſſary to thoſe who are to earn their daily bread by the labour of their hands. Be ſure then to give your children a

habit of induſtry as early as you can; neglect no opportunity of employing them in whatever is ſuitable to their years and ſtrength: though they earn ever ſo little, it will at leaſt keep them from doing miſchief, and will in time give them ſuch a habit of induſtry, as they will find the benefit of, all their lives after. Teach them alſo to be doubly diligent when no eye overlooks them, and to be particularly careful of whatever is committed to their charge.

Bringing them up thus early to labour, need not prevent a proper attention to their learning. Some time there will neceſſarily be, before they are capable of bodily labour: if that time be carefully ſpent in teaching them to read; and if at the leaſt buſy ſeaſons of the year they are properly employed in improving their little ſtock of knowledge, it will be the fault of their parents if they have not learning ſufficient for their humble ſtation in life, and to enable them to read and underſtand the plain parts of their duty, in the word of God. The inſtitution of Sunday Schools is admirably ſuited to this

purpoſe, as well as to the important one of making children regularly attend the ſervice of the church; and tends more than any thing to prevent that dreadful profanation of the ſabbath, to which ſo many unhappy wretches owe their ruin. If parents will ſecond this good inſtitution by ſending their children regularly; and will endeavour to keep up the ſpirit of it in their own management of them, during their abſence from the ſchool; the beſt effects may be expected to follow from it, and a laſting foundation be laid of decency, morality, and religion. Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you ſome of the chief points to be attended to in the education of your children; a habit of obedience and ſelf-command,—a ſenſe of the duty they owe to God and their neighbour,—a conſtant regard to truth and honeſty,—diligence and induſtry in their ſeveral callings,—and ſuch a proportion of learning as is ſuited to their ſtation in life. In addition to theſe ſeveral points, only one thing more is neceſſary, but *that* is the moſt important of all:—I mean *your own examples*. As a picture makes a more laſting impreſſion than

than a mere deſcription, ſo does example recommend more powerfully than precept. Let parents take ever ſo much pains in teaching and correcting their children, few good effects can be expected to follow their leſſons, unleſs they enforce them by their own practice. In vain can you expect your children to obey the divine laws, if they ſee you live in a habit of diſobedience to them. In vain will you correct them for lying or pilfering, if they find you regardleſs of your word, or trying to defraud and overreach one another. In vain can you hope that they will check their paſſions, when you indulge your own without limit or reſtraint.

Let this conſideration then be an additional call upon you, to a faithful diſcharge of every part of your duty; conſider, that not only your own happineſs depends upon it, but the happineſs of thoſe alſo, who are, as it were, a part of yourſelves. All who are convinced of what is moſt undoubtedly true, that *Godlineſs hath the promiſes of this life, as well as of that which is to come* *, can never

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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vant motives to a truly Chriſtian life: but how is the obligation increaſed, when we conſider the influence which our example will have upon our children; and that, according to our good or ill conduct and behaviour, we are promoting their future happineſs or miſery.

If then you do indeed love your children, and earneſtly wiſh to make them happy, both in this world and the next, the beſt proof you can give of it, and the moſt effectual means you can take for it, is to ſet them a good example in every part of your own life and practice; and then you may expect to reap the fruits of it by the honeſty and piety of theirs. Children are uſually the greateſt bleſſings or the greateſt curſes of life: that they are the one or the other, in great meaſure depends upon thoſe who have the care of them in their youth; there may be ſome exceptions to this obſervation, but it will generally be found to hold good. What a ſhock would it prove in your declining years, ſhould you live to be the miſerable witneſſes of the profligacy of your own offſpring! At that period of life, when you

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are preparing to leave the world, and have need of every comfort that conſcience can afford, to ſweeten the bitter draught, how painful would it be to reflect, that you have been the means of bringing children into the world, only to make them wretched: that you have neglected the cultivation of their minds, when it would have been an eaſy and a pleaſing taſk; and by your ill-timed indulgence have ſuffered their vices to take ſuch deep root, that you have now nothing left but to deplore the fruits of them. The ingratitude and miſconduct of a child is a calamity that bears very hard upon a parent, to whatever cauſe it may be owing; but nothing would give it ſo keen an edge, as to be conſcious that the blame muſt juſtly be laid upon your own negligence or ill example.

On the other hand, how will it calm the ſoul of the dying parent, to feel that he has done his duty in that near and tender relation! How will it ſmooth the rugged path of death, to think, that he has been an inſtrument in God's hand of bringing a pious and virtuous family into the world, and of enabling them to be ſerviceable in it. His

ituation in life, perhaps, may permit him o leave them but a ſmall ſhare of this world's goods; but he will not need to be nxious on that account, having early taught hem that, *a ſmall thing that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly** ; and having amply ſtored their minds with the good principles of religion and honeſty, which will procure them a happineſs that the world can neither give nor take away.

I have now pointed out the ſeveral duties which I intended to recommend to you; they are in general of ſuch a nature, that the bare mention of them is ſufficient to ſhew the neceſſity of living in the conſtant practice of them. Scarcely a day can paſs that you are not called upon to exerciſe the duties of induſtry, frugality, honeſty, ſobriety, chaſtity, contentment, humility, and charity. Pious affections towards God, and earneſt prayer to Him, with firm reſolutions of obeying his laws, are duties of continual obligation; and they, who have children, can never want mo-

* Pſalm xxxvii. 16.

tives

tives to bring them up in the fear of God, and in the habits of virtue and uſefulneſs. All theſe are ſuch plain and ſimple duties, that they require no learning to comprehend them; they lie open to every underſtanding, and are ſuited to men of every ſtation.

It is alſo of the utmoſt importance to remark, that the habitual practice of theſe duties is the ſureſt means of promoting your happineſs here, as well as of laying the foundation of it for the world to come. Virtue muſt ever be, in great meaſure, its own reward, and vice its own puniſhment. Whoever wiſhes to enjoy thoſe calm, compoſed, and laſting pleaſures, which are the object of every wiſe man's hopes: whoever wiſhes to preſerve his body, as far as is in his power, free from pain and diſeaſe, and to keep his mind undiſturbed by violent paſſions and headſtrong deſires: whoever wiſhes to gain the approbation of his neighbours, his conſcience, and his God, let him ſincerely and heartily endeavour to conform his life to the precepts of religion, and patiently ſubmit to that light and eaſy yoke which the goſpel impoſes;

impoſes; and then he may hope to obtain the preſent rewards of ſuch a conduct.

But beſides the preſent happineſs of a virtuous courſe, it muſt be remembered, that human life, at the longeſt, is but of ſhort duration; and when a few more ſuns have riſen and gone down, you will receive your final ſummons, and muſt appear before that awful tribunal, from whence there is no appeal. Of how great conſequence then is it, that you ſhould be able to ſtand before your Judge with a conſciouſneſs of having endeavoured, to the utmoſt of your power, to diſcharge the duties of your ſtation.

It is indeed upon the mercies of God and the merits of our bleſſed Redeemer, that every man muſt depend after all, for his final acceptance with God: *For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God* *. Nevertheleſs, though *it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure* †; it is alſo your duty to uſe your beſt endeavours in aſſiſting to work out your own ſalvation,

* Epheſ. ii. 8. † Phil. ii. 13.

and

and to ſecond the aids of God's grace by a ſtrict attention to the duties of morality and religion.

When you are ſtretched upon the bed of ſickneſs, and the vanities of life are cloſing faſt upon you, nothing will give you ſo much comfort, as the reflection that you have not ſpent an idle, and an uſeleſs life, or ſet a vicious and profligate example to others; but have laboured to perform faithfully the taſk which God allotted you. Whereas the thoughtleſs, the idle, and the wicked, will then feel the bitter reproaches of conſcience, and will vainly wiſh for a return of thoſe precious hours, which they waſted in ſin and folly, regardleſs of their own happineſs, and deſpiſing the gracious intentions of Providence.

A

Short PRAYER *for a* FAMILY.

O ETERNAL GOD, whoſe mercies are over all thy works, look down with pity upon us thy Servants, who acknowledge our tranſgreſſions, and are truly ſorry for our ſins. O Lord, we humbly beſeech thee, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, that thou wilt graciouſly pardon them, and wilt enable us, by thy good ſpirit, ſo entirely to forſake them, that henceforth we may obey thy holy will in all things. Make us, O Lord, contented in our ſtation, induſtrious in our calling, kind in our behaviour to others, and patiently reſigned to whatever thy good Providence ſhall appoint. Give us grace conſtantly to remember, that thou art preſent every where, and privy to our moſt ſecret thoughts: and let it be the daily rule of our conduct, to do to others what

we

we wiſh they ſhould do to us. We thank thee, O Lord, for the manifold bleſſings thou haſt beſtowed upon us, and for the numerous evils from which thou haſt protected us. O continue thy goodneſs towards us, and lead us by thy grace, through the temptations and trials of this life, to that happy ſtate where we ſhall ever live with thee, through the merits of our bleſſed Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt.

A

PRAYER *for a* YOUNG PERSON.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, I humbly bow my knees before thy Divine Majeſty, under a deep ſenſe of my own unworthineſs, and of thy manifold and great mercies. Have mercy upon me, I beſeech thee, and forgive me all my ſins: give me grace to flee all youthful luſts, and to remember thee my Creator in the days of my youth. I am come into a world full of ſnares and temptations:

tations: O! do thou fill me with the knowledge and love of thy truth, that it may keep me from the ways that lead to deſtruction. Bleſs me, O Lord, in my learning and buſineſs, and deliver me from ſloth and idleneſs, and ill company, and from all dangers both of body and ſoul. Shew me the way in which I ſhould walk, whilſt I am young, and grant that I may never depart from it. Bleſs to me, I pray thee, whatever good inſtructions have at any time been given me; help me carefully to remember them, and ſeriouſly to practiſe them, that I may ever be growing in knowledge and goodneſs. O Lord, I beſeech thee, keep me from all malicious and reproachful language, from all lying and ſlandering, and from all unjuſt and deceitful actions. Make me to walk before thee in uprightneſs, faithfulneſs, and honeſty, knowing that I ſhall be accountable to thee at the laſt day for every action of my life. I thank thee, O gracious God, for all the bleſſings thou haſt beſtowed upon me, [particularly for preſerving and refreſhing me the night paſt; and as thou haſt now brought me to the beginning of another day, give

me

me grace to ſpend it to thy honour and glory *.]—And all theſe mercies and bleſſings which I aſk for myſelf, I heartily deſire for all my relations and friends, and for all mankind. Let it pleaſe thee to guide us all in this preſent life, and finally to admit us into thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits, and for the ſake of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

* *In the evening.*—[particularly for the mercies of the day paſt; and now that I am going to reſt, guard me, I beſeech thee, from the dangers of this night.]



Printed by Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.